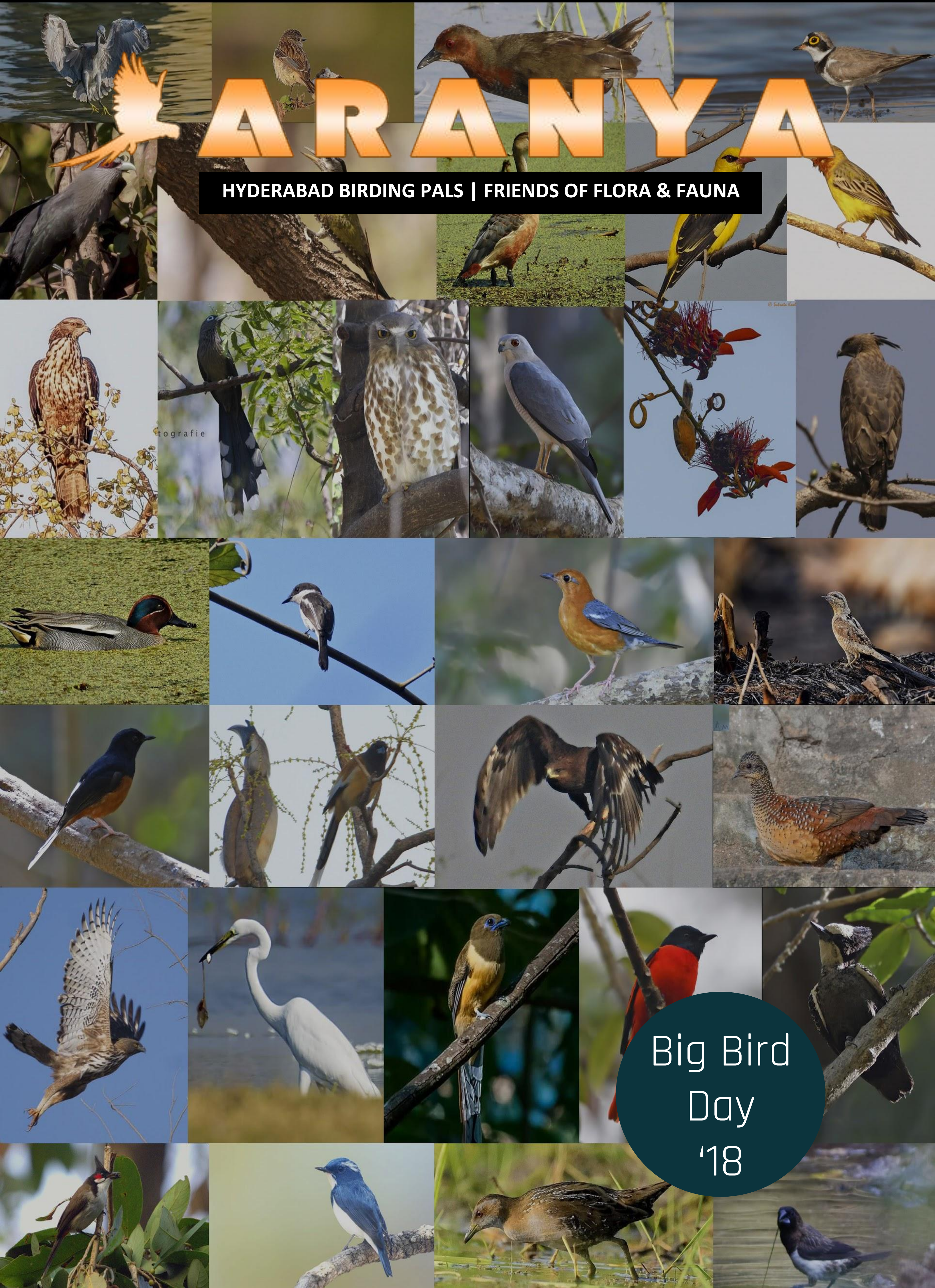
ISSUE 08 | MARCH 2018

ARANYA

HYDERABAD BIRDING PALS | FRIENDS OF FLORA & FAUNA



Big Bird Day '18

Editors
Ajinkya Supekar
Sriram Reddy
Phani Krishna Ravi
Gopalakrishna Iyer
Ashis Kumar Pradhan
Abhishek Ravindra
Hari Krishna Adepu

Proofing
Husein Latif

Content Contributors
Dasari Vijay
Ajinkya Supekar
Mulagala Srinivas
Mansi Srivastava
Fareed Mohmed
RL Senthilkumar
Sundareswaran V.R
Pradeep Nair
Gopalakrishna Iyer
Amit Singh
Naresh Vadrevu

Cover Image
Big Bird Day sightings collage made by Sriram Reddy

Back Cover
Black Winged Stilt
By RK Balaji

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Hyderabad Birding Pals

For Feedback, Contributions or More Information, Please contact us

hyderabadbirdingpals@gmail.com
www.hyderabadbirdingpals.com
HyderabadBirdingPals
HBP Birdwalks

In this issue

February was a busy month of birdwatching. Preparation of Big Bird Day (BBD) on 18th Feb took most of the time. Apart from the BBD bird walks, we had three bird walks at Himayat Sagar, Osman Sagar and Manjeera Dam. The arrival of Fulvous Whistling Ducks and sightings of Dusky Eagle Owls and Crested Bunting energized the atmosphere. This year too BBD was fully enjoyed by the participants with the event growing larger by the year. More members are participating and more locations are being covered. In this issue we have a writeup on bird rescue written by an experienced bird and animal rescuer. Trip reports of Thattekad Bird Sanctuary and Pakhal Lake are included. Hope you like reading this issue.

Happy Birding
Ajinkya Supekar

Hyderabad Birding Pals (HBP) is a group of bird watching enthusiasts based out of Hyderabad, united by a common love for birds. We organize free bird walks around the city of Hyderabad that are open to participation by all like-minded individuals. We are an informal group, who are passionate about bird watching and photography, learning about bird behavior (in the field) and doing our bit towards conservation of nature and its habitat as well. Do check our Facebook group to stay up to date on our bird watching events.

ARANYA

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February Bird Walks

188th Bird Walk | Himayat Sagar
4th February 2018

189th Bird Walk | Osman Sagar
11th February 2018

190th to 194th Bird walks on Big Bird Day
18th February 2018

195th Bird Walk | Manjeera Dam
25th February 2018

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*
By Fareed Mohmed

Osman Sagar Trip Report

By Dasari Vijay

189th Bird Walk at Osman Sagar
11th February 2018

Osman Sagar, popularly known as Gandipet, is a reservoir in the Indian city of Hyderabad. The lake is around 46 km^2, and the reservoir is around 29 km^2, with total level of 1,790 feet and a capacity of 3.9 tmc ft. A group of about 10 members reached our meeting point at appa junction from various parts of the city by 6 AM and we headed towards Osman sagar.

We parked our vehicles and formed teams and moved around the lake in different directions. Every time I go out for a bird outing in and around Hyderabad in particular to Osman sagar, a lovely waterbody for birding, I'm always pleasantly surprised with the variety of birds that welcome us.

We could find a big flock of Northern pintails, Gadwall, Northern shovelers, Spot-billed ducks, Lesser whistling ducks, Oriental Darters, Glossy Ibis, Red-naped Ibis, Siberian stonechats, Blyth's reed warbler, Booted warbler, Bronze-winged Jacana, Indian Roller, Red-rumped Swallows, Red Avadavats in huge numbers, Indian Silverbills and River Terns, Whiskered terns, Bar headed goose, Brown headed gulls, black headed gulls, I was surprised to see a very big group of Red crested Pochards. I have also seen a good number of thick knees but could not click them.

Overall a happy day for birding the climate was just good for our activity. I started back by 12 noon while others continued their quest.

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42665402

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*
By Sarath Babu Dhulipalla

River tern *Sterna aurantia*
By Sarath Babu Dhulipalla

Srini Kolla

Golden Oriole *Oriolus kundoo*
By Srinivas Kolla

Manjeera Dam Trip Report

By Ajinkya Supekar

195th Bird Walk at Manjeera Dam
25th February 2018

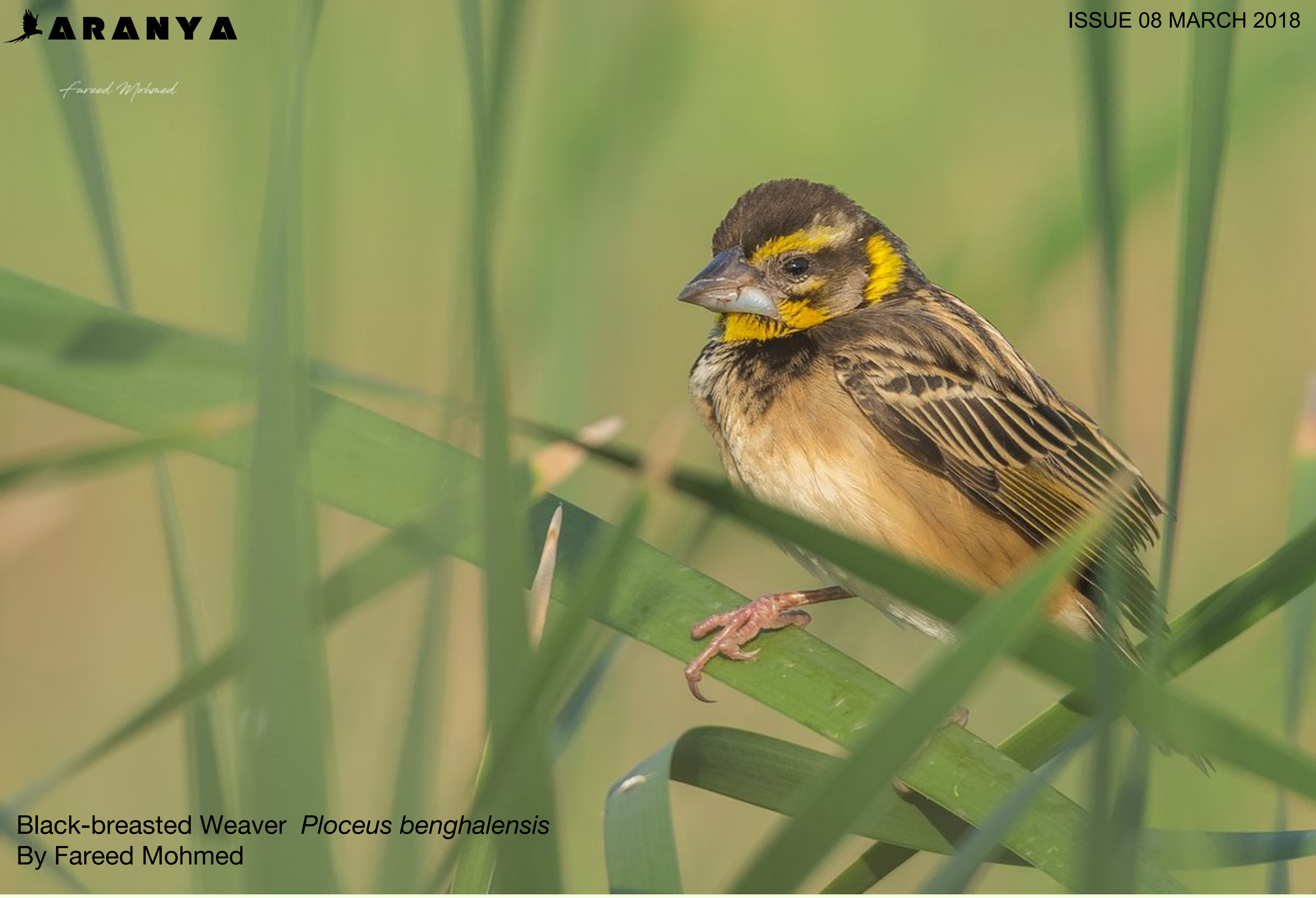
Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary (17.65°N, 78.07°E) is a riverine wetland 50 km northwest of Hyderabad in Medak district. It is a place with a good number of resident and migratory birds, in addition to being home for the Marsh Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris)* . It is recognized internationally as an Important Bird Area (IBA), due to its rich bird diversity and its high preference by migratory birds.

By now I believe readers of Aranya have known Manjeera well through trip reports in most issues. It has kept on surprising us with wonderful sightings and we can hereby say its the Mangalajodi of Telangana. There are still places here to explore regularly and no wonder they'll keep up marvelled at the avifauna it has to offer.

Starting early morning, ten members headed for the dam. This time we did not go to the usual dam site, instead we went to a new location explored previously by Mr. Sriram Reddy. It had well watered paddy fields lining the reservoir. There was a fear of crocodile activity therefore we took necessary caution. It was a clear sunny morning.

Fareed Mohmed

Ruddy-breasted Crake *Porzana fusca*
By Fareed Mohmed

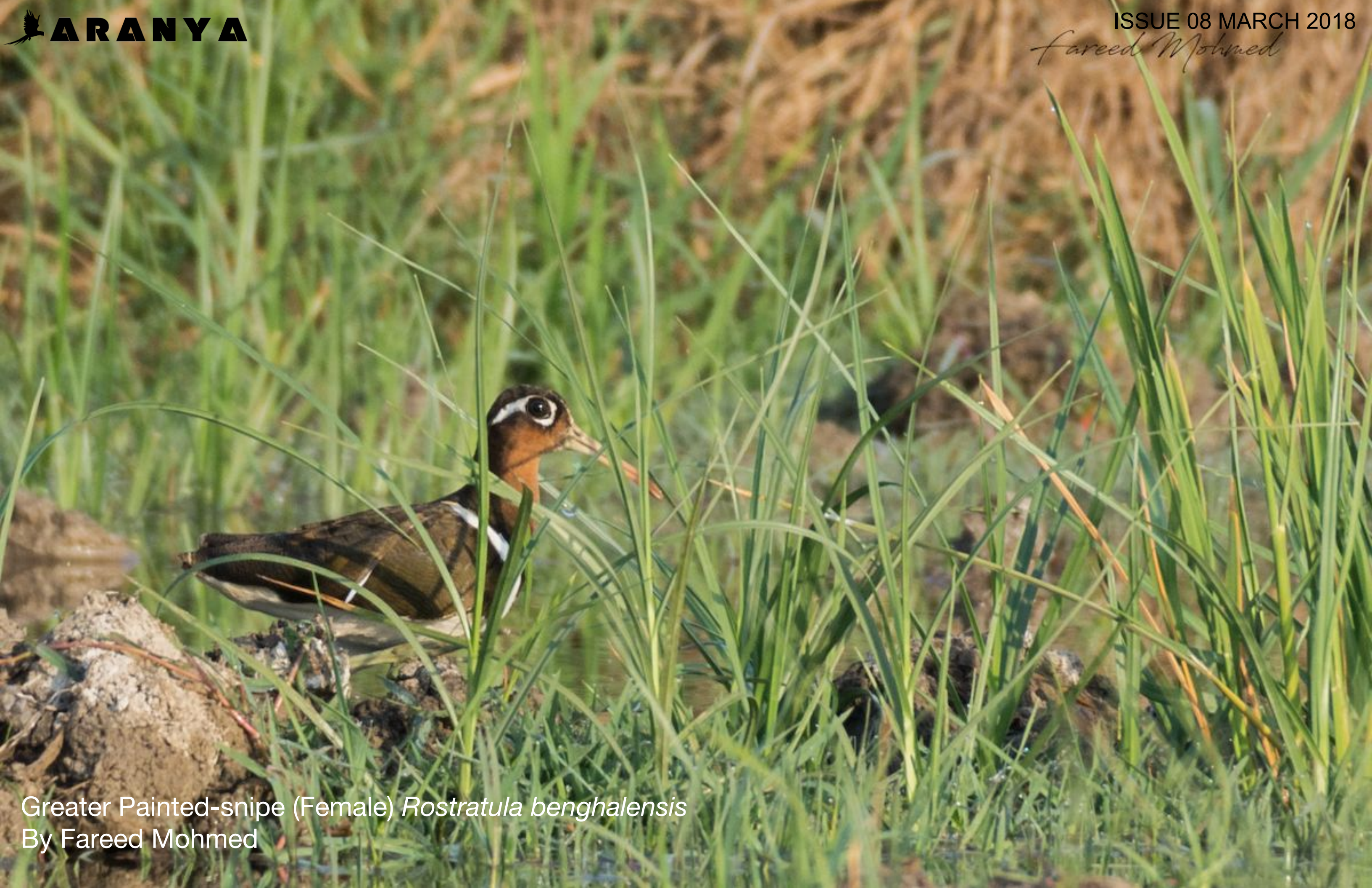


Black-breasted Weaver *Ploceus benghalensis*
By Fareed Mohmed

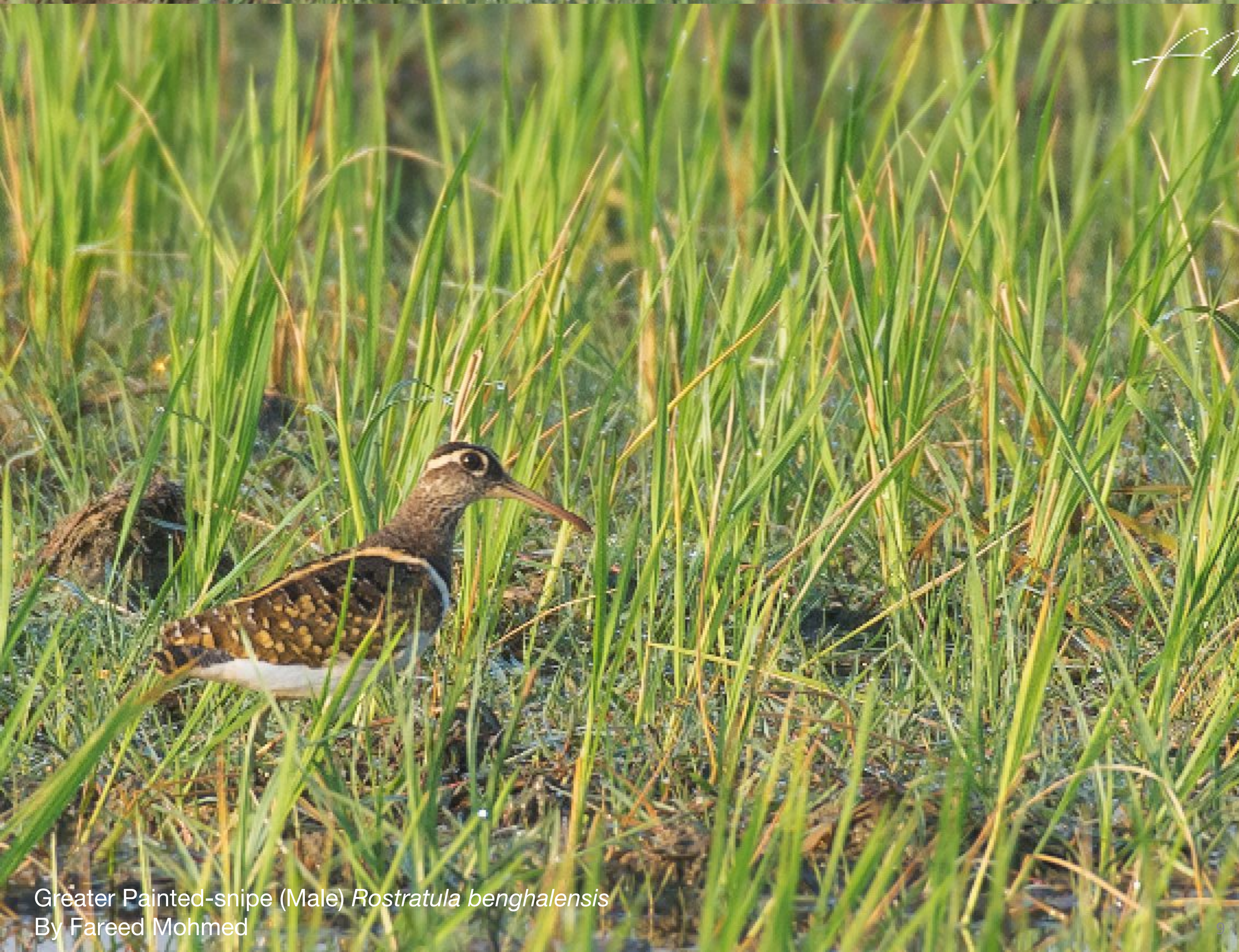
Our first stop was near the reservoir after crossing a village. The way to this spot had nice activity of birds like Baya Weavers (*Ploceus philippinus)* and Bengal Weavers (*Ploceus benghalensis)*. A large group of Western Yellow Wagtails (*Motacilla flava)* was seen of power cables and also in fields around. In the excitement of looking at all this activity I was later told that a large raptor was perched close to a tree where our car passed, missed it! The mud road is a favourite spot for Gray Francolins (*Francolinus pondicerianus)* and soon we saw some. Every other field had Wood Sandpipers (*Tringa glareola)* and small groups of Glossy Ibises (*Plegadis falcinellus)*, it was amazing to see them in such numbers.

The paddy fields had a small water filled area with lot of slush, ideal for most waders. In and around we were overwhelmed to see the number of Wood Sandpipers (*Tringa glareola*) and Little Stints (*Calidris minuta)*.

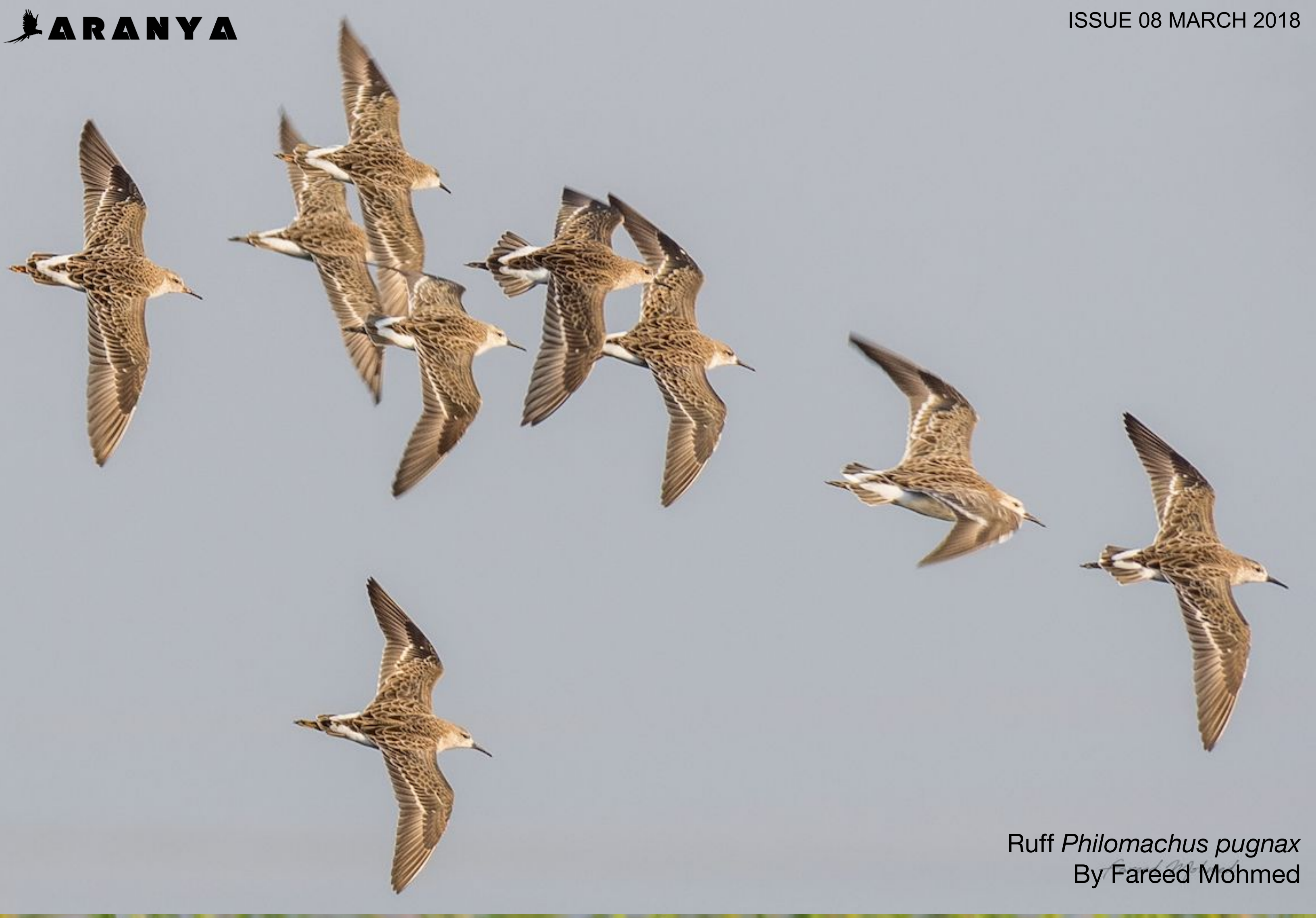
A Ruff (*Calidris pugnax)*, Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis)* and Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus)* were also seen along with Garganey (*Spatula querquedula)* cautiously noting our approach. Four pairs of Greater Painted-Snipes (*Rostratula benghalensis)* were also seen in the same location. How beautiful birds to see, they always huddle down and when they come in the open, they rush for cover. In the reeds, a Yellow Bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis)* popped out once, giving enough time to capture its image. Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus)* flew overhead and heard calls of Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus)*. Passerines like Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica)*, Red-rumped Swallows (*Cecropis daurica)*, Streak-throated Swallows (*Petrochelidon fluvicola)*, Long-tailed Shrikes (*Lanius schach)* and Indian Rollers (*Coracias benghalensis)* were feasting on insects that were plenty in number.



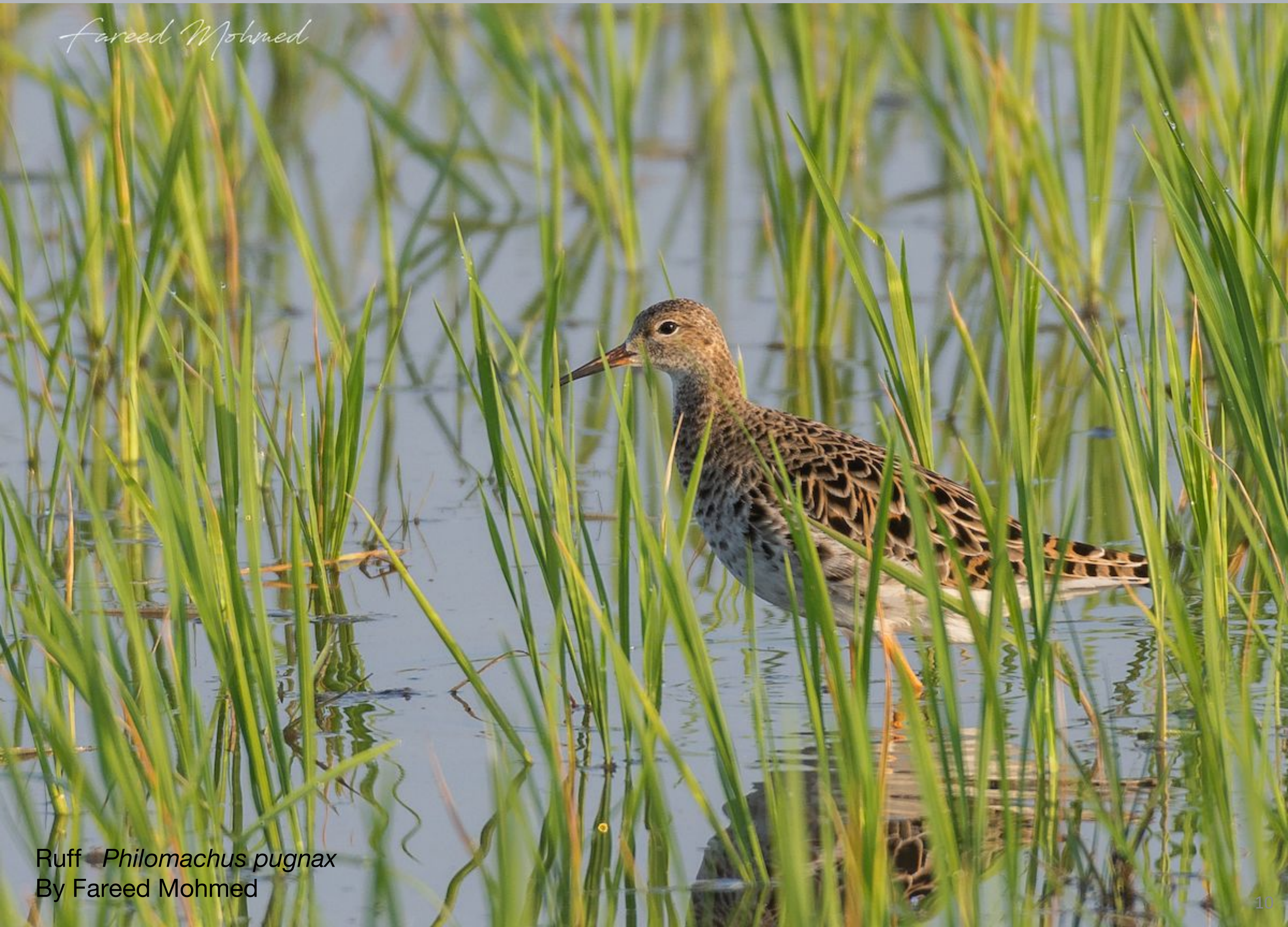
Greater Painted-snipe (Female) *Rostratula benghalensis*
By Fareed Mohmed



Greater Painted-snipe (Male) *Rostratula benghalensis*
By Fareed Mohmed



Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
By Fareed Mohmed



Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
By Fareed Mohmed

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*
By Fareed Mohmed

Ferruginous Duck (Extreme right) *Aythya nyroca*
By Fareed Mohmed

In the reservoir, there were comparatively less number of waterfowl, hardly any ducks. Eurasian Coots (*Fulica atra)* were everywhere, few Egrets and Whiskered Terns (*Chlidonias hybrida)*.

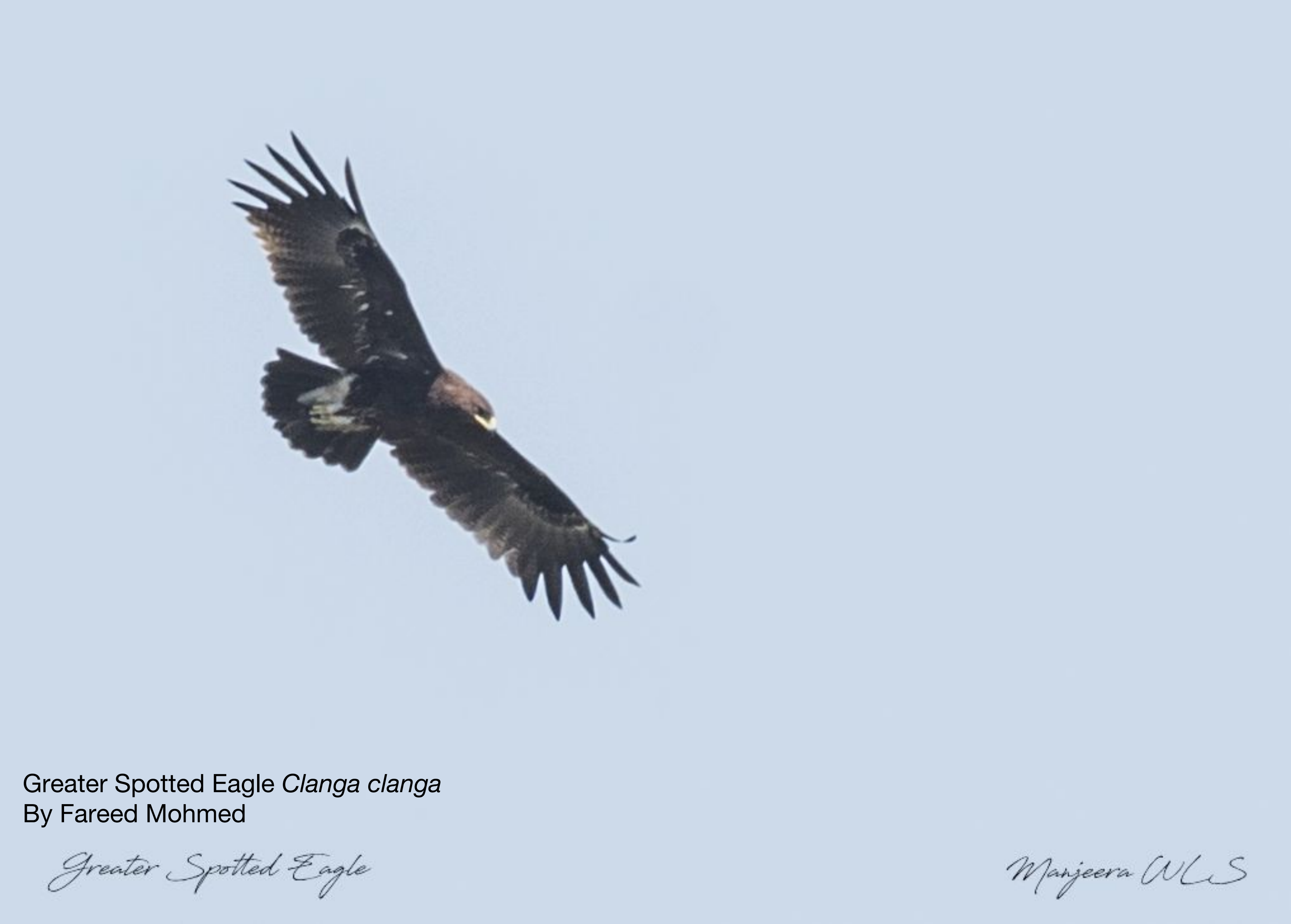
We moved ahead to another location that had a lake and irrigated fields to the other side of the bund. On the way a Greater Spotted Eagle (*Clanga clanga)* glided on thermals scanning the ground for prey. Asian Openbills (*Anastomus oscitans)* were busy gleaning through the water filled fields.

In the lake there was many ducks- Lesser Whistling-Ducks (*Dendrocygna javanica)*, Comb Ducks (*Sarkidiornis melanotos)*, Ruddy Shelducks (*Tadorna ferruginea)*, Gadwall (*Mareca strepera)*, Eurasian Wigeon (*Mareca penelope)*, Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca)*, Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina)*, Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca)* and Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor)*.

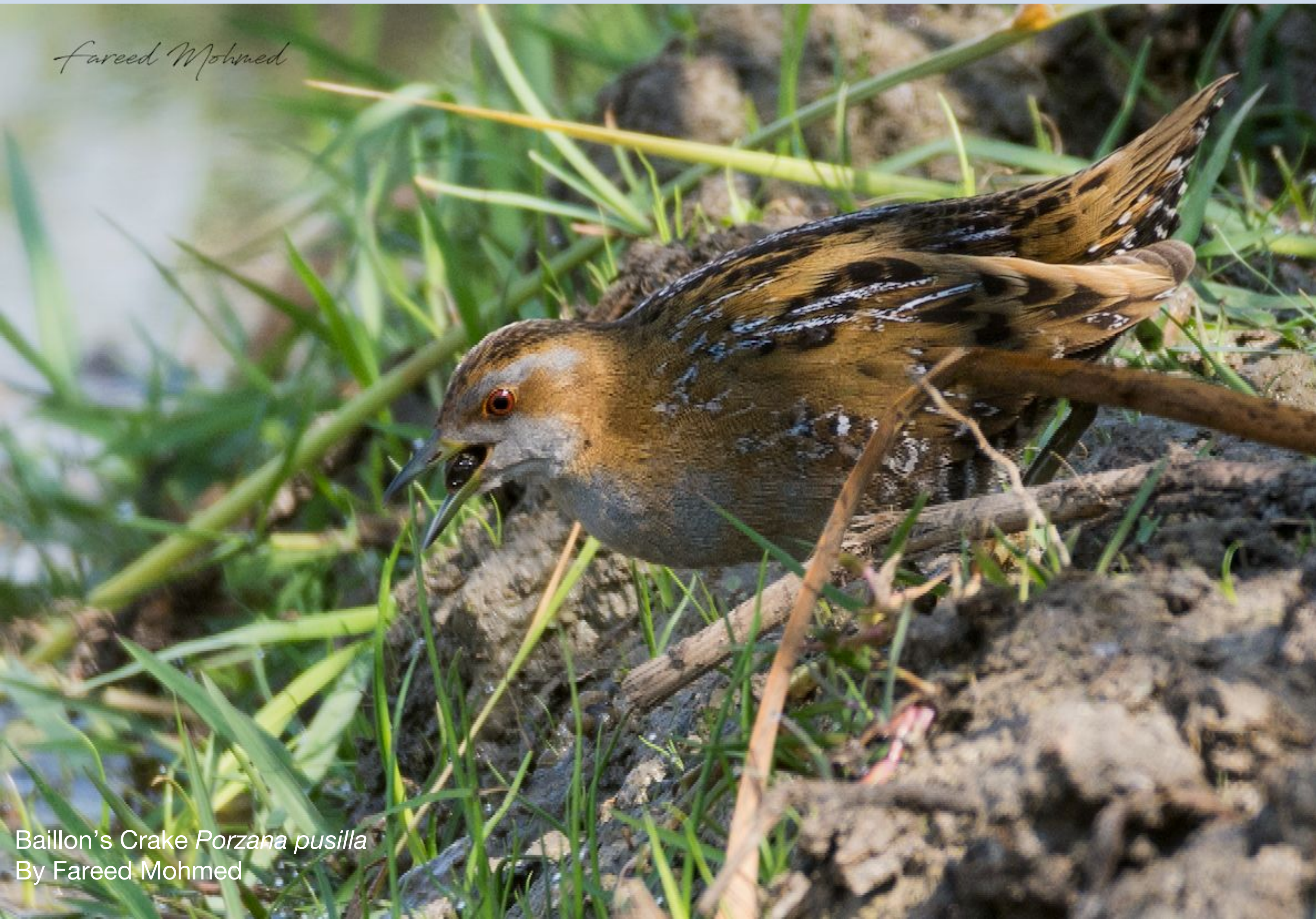
Few Cotton Pygmy-Geese (*Nettapus coromandelianus)* were also seen. In the fields on the other side of the bund, we knew a place where there are reeds surrounded by fields. Here Ruddy-breasted Crake (Zapornia fusca) and Baillon's Crake (Zapornia pusilla) came out of the reeds to feed. This gave us an excellent photo opportunity and a chance to know about their behaviour.

With this we concluded the bird walk with a total species count of 122.

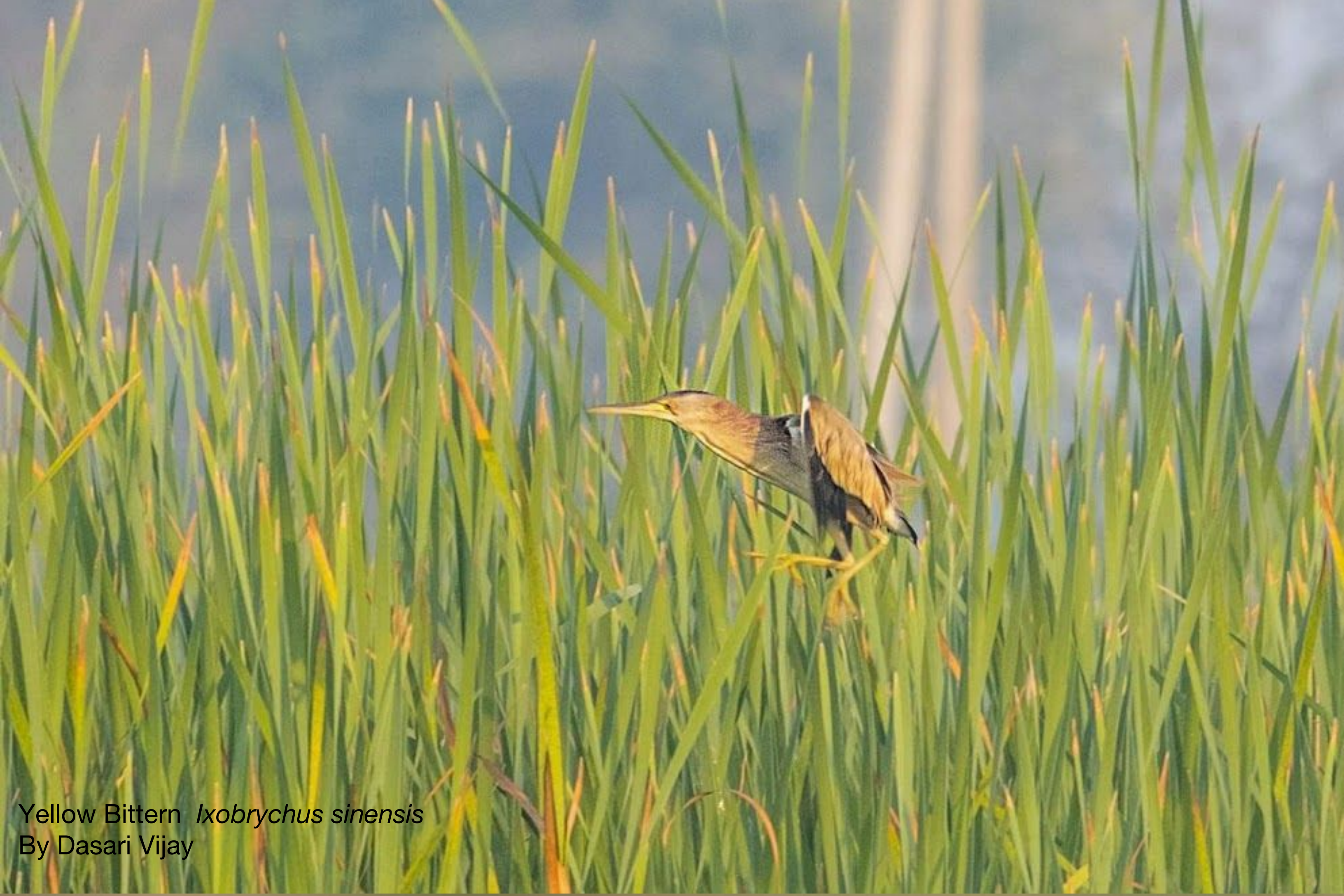
Link to eBird checklist,
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S43165503


Greater Spotted Eagle
Manjeera WLS

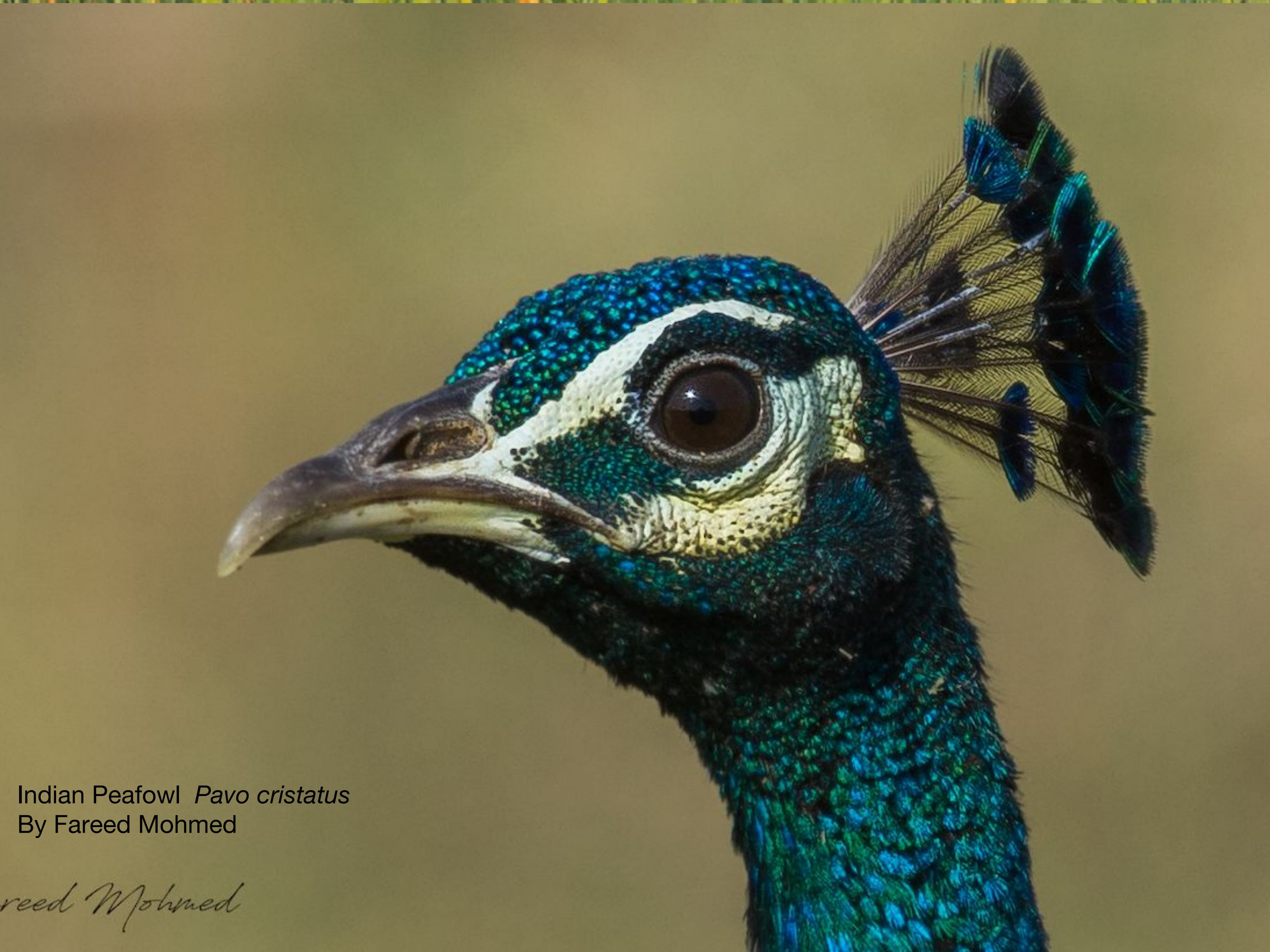
Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*
By Fareed Mohmed


Fareed Mohmed

Baillon’s Crake *Porzana pusilla*
By Fareed Mohmed



Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*
By Dasari Vijay



Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*
By Fareed Mohmed

Big Bird Day and HBP

By Ajinkya Supekar

Big Bird Day (BBD) is an annual national level event of watching and documenting birds, held every February or March. Participants dedicate a full day to see the most number of species at chosen locations. Started in 2004 by "Delhi Bird" group, as an informal event, it has now become popular among all the bird-lovers in India. Every year, self-organized volunteer birders under the guidance of chosen group leader(s), cover the hotspots from dawn to dusk to document the birds. The data collected is submitted to ebird.org - a bird listing website. Over the years, this data has revealed the changing trends in habitat condition, bird diversity, migration and related ecological issues.

Hyderabad Birding Pals (HBP) has been regularly participating in BBD since 2014. HBP won the Big Bird Day 2017 by reporting more than 260 bird species and in 2016, finished as a runner-up. Keeping the spirit of enjoying the activity and without causing any disturbances to their habitat, HBP has been challenging itself to surpass the previous records. It has seen a steady increase in the number of birds and the participants alike. There has been a noticeable awareness about our presence in the birding community. We have recorded many surprises too! Last year's sighting of Eastern Marsh Harrier (*Circus spilonotus*) at Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary on BBD was the first report of the species from the state of Telangana. Other surprises seen by HBP on BBD, were Indian Blue Robin (*Luscinia brunnea*), Brown Hawk Owl (*Ninox scutulata*), Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*), Banded Bay Cuckoo (*Cacomantis sonneratii*), Red Crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) and Black Naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*).

Team HBP has scouted many locations and has successfully explored them. In 2013, four locations were explored and this year the location count has increased to over fifteen! Team HBP has been learning a lot about conservation through bird-watching; for instance, making ebird checklists for each birdwalk is mandatory now. Also, conservation activities picked up pace at many locations like Ameenpur lake, Fox sagar and Ananthagiri hills.

BBD has now become our most awaited annual festival that we celebrate meticulously!

Previous numbers:

1) BBD 2014 - 6 members - 130 species
2) BBD 2015 - 5 teams - 193 species
3) BBD 2016 - 7 teams - 233 species
4) BBD 2017 - 10 teams - 263 species

BBD'18 Participants

The team members of big bird day are to be thanked immensely for their time and effort. Supporting the team leader, the members took record shots of birds, looked for target bird species, kept going through the day even though the summer heat had started to come. We had many members who participated in BBD for the first time, hope they continue to join year after year. Kudos to everyone's hard work.

1. Team Brown Fish Owl (BFO): Ananthagiri hills

Ajinkya Supekar (TL), Manjula Desai, Raghavrao Suryadevra, Nishant Shah, Sidhu Verma and Sharabh Kaushal.

2. Team Yellow Throated Bulbul (YTB): Nallamalla Forest i.e. Uma Maheswaram, Rushula Cheruvu and Mallela Theertham –

Fareed Mohmed (TL), Manoj Kumar Vittapu, Soumyajit Basu, Murtaza Abrar, Shreeniwas Kandukuree, Harish Kotari and Rajesh Goud.

3. Team Black-Headed Bunting (BHB): Manjira dam and Singur dam reservoirs

Ashis Kumar Pradhan (TL), Subrata Kool, Bhaarat Vyas, Anand Kalinadhabhatla, Siddharth Kallam, Mangeshsingh Thakur, Rakesh Reddy Ponnala, Sarath Babu Dhulipalla, Latchi Raju Mantena, Ravishankar Ramanathan, Sahil Meghani and Alnoor Rajwani.

4. Team Short-Eared Owl (SEO): Osman Sagar, Himayat Sagar, S.V.P National Police Academy and Kokapet.
Abhishek Ravindra(TL), Rachna Gujral, Prasanna Kumar Mamidala, Senthilkumar RI, Suman Bhattacharjee and Shekar Vishvanath

5. Team Spot-Billed Pelican (SBP): ICRISAT, Ameenpur and Botanical gardens

Mulagala Srinivas (TL), Chetan Sai, Kalyan Ineni, Chaitanya Basava.

6. Team Grey-Headed Fish Eagle (GHFE): Kawal Tiger Reserve and Kadam Dam

Gopalakrishna Iyer (TL), Balakrishna Marar, Sundareswaran Vetaikorumagan and Vinode MP

7. Team Fulvous Whistling Duck (FWD): Warangal

Phani Krishna Raavi (TL)

8. Team Green-Billed Malkoha (GBM): Gubbala Mangamma Talli temple

Sriram Reddy (TL), Naresh Vadrevu, Vinay Kumar Navulla and Naveen Sama.

9. Team Common Rose-Finch (CRF): Narsapur, Pocharam and Sriram sagar dam

Harikrishna Adepu (TL), Raghu Nathan, Rajeev Khandelwal, Vikrant Yadav, Vincent Vinay Kumar, RK Balaji, Vijay Dasar and Rohith Nareddy

10. Team Shaheen: Bejjur Forest
Ravikanth Manchiryala (TL)

11. Edulabad Lake: Praveen Parvani

Big Bird Day 2018 Teams

Team BHB

Team SEO

Team CRF

Team YTB

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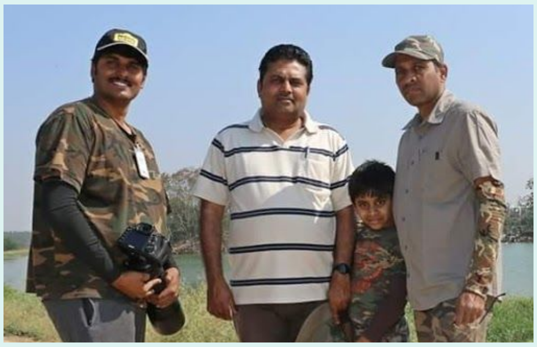
Team GHFE



Team SBP

Team BFO

Team GBM

Team FWD

Team YTB

Big Bird Day 2018 Debutants

In this case great experience is a very small term to define the whole day. We had a super rich intelligent team from 17-60+ of age group they were so enthusiastic for the day out. Their enthusiasm made our day perfect. The expected species had all been captured in our lenses.. both of our eyes and cameras.. We all had a great day.. hope to have many more field work with such great team.

Subrata Kool :: Team Black Heading Bunting

It was a very wonderful birding experience for me . We enjoyed the full day non stop birding with Abhishek. I am appreciating the team HBP for their dedication and well organised planning. Love to be part of many such upcoming events.

Senthilkumar Rl :: Team Short-eared Owl

Great Experience of birding for more than 12 hours , Enjoyed the company of the team Ajinkya , Manjula , Siddu , nishanth and others. Ajinkya is so serious in spotting the birds with his binoculars and noting down the bird id's and Manjula assisting him with id shots not missing even a single species. Finally we covered all the possible birding spots in and around Ananthagiri Hills, not leaving even the dump yard!

Raghava Rao S :: Team Brown Fish Owl

The Big Bird Day of 2018 was my first ever experience of its kind.

BBD gave me a different perspective towards birdwatching. It was all about recording and moving on! Overall, it was a great educational day for me. My team leader, Ajinkya supekar had excellent knowledge of the surroundings and was very helpful in recording a large number of species in and around the area.

Manjula Desai :: Team Brown Fish Owl

This Big Bird Day was a wonderful celebration of our avian friends through the dedication of an entire day to birdwatching and recorded the number of species sighted in a dedicated hotspot. The Big Bird Day was initially started by the DelhiBird group as an informal event held in February or March. This Big Bird Day was held on February 18, 2018 and 153 species of birds were recorded by Team Common RoseFinch.

RK Balaji :: Team Common Rosefinch

It was most memorable day where we got a chance to explore total remote area of Gubbala Mangamma forest. Happy to add 20+ additional species to the Big Bird Daylist compared to last year Big Bird Day. In this sighting of Bar-winged flycatcher-shrike, Malabar Trogon, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Green-billed Malkoha and Scarlet Minivet were the highlights.

Vinay Kumar N :: Team Green-billed Malkoha

BBD'18 Results

By Mulagala Srinivas

The Big Bird Day 2018
18th February 2018, Sunday

A day to remember in the Hyderabad Birding history as more than 300 species of birds were sighted and reported in a single day by Hyderabad Birding Pals in the birding exercise undertaken from dawn to dusk.

An exceptionally well organised, coordinated and executed effort with perfect discipline and sincerity ..yet again !

This year too, The HBP Group has fielded 10 teams with over 50 participants covering 20 locations in and around Hyderabad and the teams returned a collective score of 306 species of birds in a single days birding effort from dawn to dusk bettering last years tally of 263 species.

Enviable feat indeed !!! (Probably unmatched number for a day within such a limited area of operation).

This could be achieved by the excellent efforts put up by the members during their regular bird walks, learning from earlier exercises, discussions, studying the habits and habitats of birds, consistently unearthing more locations and thus the resultant progression in the number(s) of species.

The score accounts for almost 72% of the overall species (426) so far recorded by our predecessors in the twin states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.The increase in the overall species of the area from 403 to 426 can be accounted majorly due to the efforts of the HBP.

Incredible effort and a deserving result !!!! Wonderful job friends..... very well done by the young group of dedicated birders !! Keep up the standards !!!

The major Highlights of the day are the incredible sightings and inclusions of the Malabar Trogon,the elusive Besra,Black Eagle, the uncommon Brown Hawk Owl,Spot-bellied Eagle Owl, Fulvous Whistling Duck,Forest Wagtail,Black Stork, Black-Naped Oriole, Malabar Whistling Thrush, Mottled Wood Owl, Long Billed Vulture and Shaheen Falcon by the various team members.

Special mention here for Team YTB led by Fareed Mohmed with 202 species being the highest by any team pan India.Need to mention Team GBM led by Sriram Reddy for the discovery of the wonderful new birding haven at Gubbala Mangamma talli's abode with the incredible variety of species.

Great job friends !!

BBD'18 Team Highlights

By Mulagala Srinivas

1. Team Brown Fish Owl (BFO): Ananthagiri hills - Leader - Ajinkya Supekar A total of 101 birds from Ananthagiri Hills with the important inclusions of Eurasian Sparrow-hawk, Brown Fish Owl, Mottled Wood Owl, Savannah Nightjar and Western Crowned Warbler.

2. Team Yellow Throated Bulbul (YTB): Nallamalla Forests i.e. Uma Maheswaram, Rushula Cheruvu and Mallela Theertham – Leader - Fareed Mohmed

A whopping record total of 202 birds from Nallamalla Forests with the impressive sightings of Besra, Lesser Kestrel. Black Eagle, Jungle Owlet, Spot-Bellied Eagle Owl , Oriental Scops Owl ,Indian Scimitar Babbler and Yellow Throated Bulbul.

3. Team Black-Headed Bunting (BHB): Manjira dam and Singur dam reservoirs – Leader - Ashis Kumar Pradhan

A total of 145 birds from Manjira dam and Singur dam reservoirs with the important sightings of Brown Hawk Owl, Forest Wagtail, Western Reef Egret, Eurasian Wryneck, and Black-Naped Oriole.

4. Team Short-Eared Owl (SEO): Osman Sagar, Himayat Sagar and Mrugvani national park – Leader - Abhishek Ravindra

An impressive total of 196 birds from Osman Sagar, Himayat Sagar and Kokapet Lake with the important inclusions of Short Eared owl, Yellow-legged Button Quail, Indian Eagle Owl, Red crested Pochard and Brown Crake.

5. Team Spot-Billed Pelican (SBP): ICRISAT, Ameenpur and Botanical gardens - Leader - Mulagala Srinivas

A total of 148 birds ICRISAT, Ameenpur and Botanical gardens with the important inclusions of Spot Billed Pelican, Greater-spotted Eagle and Richard's Pipit.

6. Team Grey-Headed Fish Eagle (GHFE): Kawal and Kadam Dam – Leader - Gopalakrishna Iyer

A total of 134 birds at Kawal with the wonderful sightings of Black Stork , River Lapwing, Olive-backed Pipit , Streak-throated Woodpecker and Spotted Redshank..

7. Team Fulvous Whistling Duck (FWD): Warangal – Leader – Phani Krishna Raavi

A total of 104 birds at Warangal with the important addition of Fulvous Whistling Duck,Jacobin Cuckoo,Baillon's Crake and Ashy Wood Swallow.

8. Team Green-Billed Malkoha (GBM): Gubbala Mangamma Talli temple - Leader- Sriram Reddy

A delightful total of 111 birds at Khammam area with the select sightings and significant inclusions of the Malabar Trogon, Green-billed Malkoha, Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Bar-winged Flycatcher Shrike, Tickell's Thrush, Thick-billed Warbler and Greater Flameback.

9. Team Common Rose-Finch (CRF): Narsapur, Pocharam and Sriram sagar dam - Leader: Harikrishna Adepu

A total of 164 birds at Narsapur, Pocharam and Sriram sagar dam with the select sighting of the Malabar Whistling Thrush, Lesser Sand Plover and Pin-tailed Snipe with the important inclusion of the Syke's Short-toed Lark.

10. Team Shaheen: Bejjur Forest - leader: Ravikanth Manchiryala

A total of 10 birds at Bejjur Forest with the important inclusions of the Indian Vulture and Peregrine (Shaheen) Falcon.

eBird checklists

1. Team Brown Fish Owl (BFO): Ananthagiri hills

https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S42964591
https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S42964428

2. Team Yellow Throated Bulbul (YTB): Nallamalla Forests i.e. Uma Maheswaram, Rushula Cheruvu and Mallela Theertham

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42965118

3. Team Black-Headed Bunting (BHB): Manjira dam and Singur dam reservoirs

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42921301

4. Team Short-Eared Owl (SEO): Osman Sagar, Himayat Sagar and Mrugvani national park

https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S42934172
https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S42935219
https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S42959936
https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S42935966
https://ebird.org/india/view/checklist/S42960116

5. Team Spot-Billed Pelican (SBP): ICRISAT and Ameenpur

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42959730
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42960304

6. Team Grey-Headed Fish Eagle (GHFE): Kawal and Kadam Dam

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42966909

7. Team Fulvous Whistling Duck (FWD) : Warangal

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42936728
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42935944
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42934625
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42933706

8. Team Green-Billed Malkoha (GBM): Gubbala Mangamma Talli temple

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42955782

9. Team Common Rose-Finch (CRF): Narsapur, Pocharam and Sriram sagar dam

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42921301
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42967972

10.Team Shaheen : Bejjur Forest

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S43021983

BBD'18 Experiences

Fareed Mohmed, TL, Team YTB

The Motivation to participate in BBD 2018 was high right from the end of BBD 2017 when I participated as an individual reporting from Ibrahim Cheruvu. I knew all the Species I report from this place were common ones and will not make any positive contribution to HBP's target, I still continued. To my Surprise I saw a Bengal Weaver in nice plumage that day. It was a Lifer for me and it added one species from my end to HBP's Target. The Photo even got Published on DC's Article about BBD and HBP's Effort. It was not much but enough to feel Motivated to do better than this Next time.

It was on Feb 5 2018 when plan for this BBD started brewing on a WhatsApp group created by Phani. Locations were listed and everyone was asked to pick the location of choice. I wanted to pick Nallamala right from the beginning but was hesitant to select it since Sriram has the best knowledge of this location. In a surprise move Sriram picked Gubbala Mangamma Thalli Temple and I opted for Nallamala.

After selecting Nallamala came the flood of location suggestions (Uma Maheshwaram, Rasool Cheruvu, Tiger Reserve, Mallela Theertham, Lodi Mallaya, Octopus Viewpoint, plus a few more unnamed ponds) that needed to be checked in Nallamala. This location was expected to give second highest unique species towards our goal. It became very clear very soon the kind of Responsibility I was carrying. The only way this could be a success was by having right team members.

The first Person in my mind for this challenge was Manoj Kumar Vittapu. He is the man who participated in Tiger census 2018 at Nallamala and had the best and most recent understanding of this location. He readily accepted the challenge and we started planning activities. The next person to join us was Soumyajit Basu. He is pretty good and quick with his camera in a variety of situations one faces with light in a place like Nallamala. During the Next few days few more enthusiastic members joined hands to explore Nalamalla for Big Bird Day. We were 8 member team Manoj V, Soumyajit Basu, Murtuza Abrar, Harish Kotari, Shreeniwas Kandukuree, Hari Krishna, Rajesh Goud and Me. A week before the event we were going through all previous checklists from the region, Identifying what species can be found where and who holds primary responsibility for which species. We had to eliminate few locations like Lodi Mallaya, Octopus viewpoint from the plan due to time and resource constraint. Before the event we understood 150 is a good and easily reachable number considering Uma Maheshwaram for forest birds and Rasool Cheruvu for Waders.

Wednesday a week before was a special day at Uma Maheshwaram Temple it attracts hundreds of devotees to this temple on this day. This raised concerns in our minds about bird activity in following week. It was either very less activity due to too much human presence or very high activity due to lot of leftover food. The only way to find out was when we reach there.

We started for Nallamala on 17th Feb around 11 am.

Plan was to pre-explore places like Uma maheshwaram, Rasool Cheruvu and few ponds in between. All team members were very excited and focused right from the beginning. Everyone knew what responsibilities each one had to deliver during this event. After visiting some of these planned places we reached Uma Maheshwaram about 30 minutes prior to sunset. The bird activity was something like I never saw before at Uma Maheshwaram. Birds everywhere you can see. Bulbuls, Leafbirds, Starlings, Doves and Pigeons etc. everything were in good numbers. we were easily around 140+ species for pre-exploration phase. This raised hopes that we may reach around 180 to 190 species easily next day.

Next day on Feb 18, we were surprised by how fast our list was getting filled at Uma Maheshwaram and Rasool Cheruvu. we easily got every expected bird and rare ones too. This was turning out to be the best birding ever done. Alpine swift, Pacific Golden plover, White Rumped Shama, Pochard, Pintail, flycatchers, Spurfowl, Grey junglefowl, Nightjars, Owls etc.. all getting ticked one by one, Plus we had many un-identified ones too by the end of the day. There was a growing confidence within the team that we have crossed easily 180 species. So as of that day end we gave a preliminary number of 180. In the next two days we were looking for every bird we clicked again and again to see if we mis-identified it and kept posting for ID confirmations. By the Time we finished our Checklist we were 203 Species. This was a sense of relief from the responsibility we had on our shoulder. This event would stay fresh in our minds for a long time.

Working as a Team, Proper Planning, Notes from senior members and Confidence on every member were primary reasons for this achievement.

Indian Tit *Machlolophus aplonotus*
By Shreeniwas Kandukuree

SHREENIWAS KANDUKUREE | FEB 2018

Yellow-throated Petronia *Petronia superciliaris*
By Shreeniwas Kandukuree

SHREENIWAS KANDUKUREE | FEB 2018

White-rumped Shama
Copsychus malabaricus
By Shreeniwas Kandukuree

R.L.Senthilkumar, Team SEO

The 'Big bird day on 18 February 2018, also coinciding with the HBP's 190th bird walk was organized to make a feasible count of the avian fauna spread across the state of Telangana. Each team of the HBP was identified by the name of the prominent bird species of the area they were allotted to survey. Thus, we the 'Short Eared Owl' group with Abhishek Ravindra, Shekar Vishvanath, Prasanna Kumar Mamidala, Rachna Gujral, Suman Bhattacharjee and myself covered the Kokapet Lake and outskirts, Osman Sagar Lake, Himayat Sagar Lake, SVP National Police Academy and Mir Alam Tank of the Ranga Reddy district. Built around 200 years ago the Mir Alam Tank was the primary drinking water source to the people of Hyderabad. Situated near to the Nehru Zoological park it is now home for variety of birds, similar to the younger Osman sagar and Himayat sagar reservoirs.

The SVP national police academy is equally famous as the birding hot spot of Hyderabad. The team covered this entire stretch in a single day under the precise planning and zeal of 'team leader' Abhishek Ravindra, an astute birder and photographer surprisingly aided only by a pair of binocular. In this enjoyable endeavour we could record 192 individual species which included flycatchers, woodpeckers, owls, kingfishers, hornbill, barbets, pheasants, cuckoos, parakeets, ducks, gulls, terns, storks, snipes, pratincoles etc.

As a first timer with HBP this was an unforgettable learning experience for me. Though every species has its uniqueness and charm, spotting the 'Short-Eared Owl' and 'Indian Rock Eagle Owl' in its natural habitat was ecstatic. Eagerly waiting for the next event and for the moment reminiscing on our joyous exploration.

Small Pratincole *Gla*reola lactea
By R.L.Senthilkumar

Sundareswaran V.R, Team SEO
Kawal Tiger Reserve

On 16th February around 6:00 PM, I received a call from Dr Marar telling me that the team headed by Gopalakrishna has got just that…. the head and nothing else! And we should perhaps pitch in and strengthen the team. Immediately the earlier plans were tossed out the window and we rushed to book a couple of rooms in the Jannaram Forest House. That done, we planned the road-map for the birding and went to our respective beds in the early hours of 17th.

Starting in the afternoon of 17 March, at about 2:00 PM, we reached the forest guest house at about 8:00 PM. Just before arriving at the guest house, we were surprised by an Indian Fox, running across the road and giving us a decent pose for a couple of minutes before rushing inside the forest. Our plans of some nocturnal birding, though, took a hit with a hip-hop party having arrived at a nearby resort before we ourselves arrived. So, being the good boys that we were, we retired to our rooms early.

In the morning, before the driver arrived, we heard some lovely calls of Mottled Wood Owl and a pair of Spotted Owlets. The driver, Ashok, then arrived at the appointed time and took us to the core areas of the forest. Just behind the closed pole-gate of the forest, we ticked off a pair of Rufous Treepies and a Black Drongo to set the list rolling. We were greeted by a cacophony of Bulbul and Robin calls and on the way we also sighted a flock of Yellow-footed Green Pigeons. Soon we saw a Shikra flying overhead but could not take any decent shot of the raptor.

We then came upon the first of several small water bodies dotting the forest floor. Jumping out of the vehicle, Gopal went looking for the source of some familiar sound while Dr. Marar sighted a Black Redstart trying hard to hide itself behind some twigs. Myself and Mr Vinod meanwhile tried to focus on something more easy! Soon we were ticking off a Forest Wagtail, a few couple of Petronias, Blue-tailed Bee Eaters, Fantails, Orange-headed Thrush, etc.. But the best of the lot was what Gopal went after and after finding it, called to us… a screaming Oriental Honey Buzzard. He, the Buzzard, I mean, made sure each of us had our click fills before flying off from his perch.

We then went to another lake, to the west of the first one, where we sighted Cormorants, Spot-billed Ducks, some Teals and an odd Black naped hare, too! We then drove to the Kadem Left Canal (of river Godavari). Hardly had we crossed it on foot (albeit a dry river bed!) when a couple of Black Storks welcomed us to another lake bed. Iora, Crested Tree Swift and a couple of Grey Hornbills and a few smattering of Cinereous Tits, Wagtails and Palm Swifts later, we were back in the vehicle riding, not before picking up a pair of pugmarks of some big cat. And then, near the parked vehicle, our driver showed us some recent scats of a Leopard…. We picked up speed and a pair of Paradise flycatchers too before fleeing from the spot!! On our way to another locale, to remind us that we were indeed inside a forest, a couple of Chitals, chousingha and a lone Nilgai bull also showed up near our vehicle…

We stopped the vehicle when a Lesser Flameback flew, cutting across our path. I was busy pursuing the Woodpecker when my phone rang. It was for the driver who was summoned to the office as there were some (more) important guests to be taken around, thus cutting short our jolly ride in the official buggy. After a decent brunch and coffee, we were back on the roads, riding our own vehicle this time. At the next water-body that we stopped by, we spotted the Crested Hawk-Eagle and a few regulars like Rollers, Green Bee Eaters and Babblers etc. A few minutes drive later, also within the jungle, we could see a lone spotted Redshank wading in waters, with a Buzzard buzzing overhead. And then we were on road again, moving towards the Pushkar Ghat on the river Godavari….

…when Gopal suddenly stopped the car and jumped out. Soon we all followed suit and were treated to the beautiful pose from a Streak-throated Woodpecker. Oh, what a beauty it is!! A LIFER for all except our head, Gopal! But before this, we happened to see another woodpecker and were all so surprised and shocked, too. A Lesser Flameback lying dead on the road, victim of a road-kill…

As we drove on, with the river still a few kilometers away, we were treated to something special to our left. So special that the moderators of e-bird, mesmerized by the numbers we reported about Petronia did reconfirm. There was a couple of WAVES of Petronias flying around the drying up fields, as though they are some miniatures of Starlings! And there were hordes of Plum-headed Parakeets, too, keeping them company! While these were so, on the other side of the road was, what else but, another beautiful lake with its share of Ibis, Cormorants, Grebes, Sandpipers, Jacanas and Grey-headed Swamphens…. A perfect mélange of birds! But we had not reached the Pushkar Ghat yet!!

On the Ghat there was some big action taking place. A Purple Heron Juvenile had caught a big, well, a BIG frog and was struggling to maintain its grip on it, whilst the frog was all action, slipping from the Heron’s grip every passing second! It had almost eased itself to safety when the Heron finally landed its beak expertly over the frog’s neck and off he flew with his booty. Meanwhile, around our feet, we had a spattering of Wagtails, Pipits and Larks, all vying for our attention (so we should think! Else, what are we birders for?!!). As we approached the smooth flowing stream, we happened to flush out a few groups of Common Snipes, a few Sandpipers and a pair of Kingfishers, too. While we were set on these more mundane life forms, Gopal had his eyes set on something special… a River Lapwing! Needless to say it was a LIFER for all the other three in the team! We also managed to capture images of a Common Kestrel and a Black-shouldered Kite.

Kawal tiger reserve is a vast area with varied habitats. It's definitely underexplored and we believe there could be much more. Though we were looking for birds alone, signatures of the leopard, hyena, deers, fox and hares added the spice to the birding event. This birding experience was awesome and I am sure this place will call us again.. Till then… happy birding

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Birding At Pakhal Lake

By Mansi Srivastava

On a late friday evening we started from Hyderabad to a waterbody in Warangal district – Pakhal lake. This lake is a man-made lake constructed by the kakatiya rulers, the history says. After a long drive with Sriram Reddy and Gopalakrishna, we reached our destination just before sunrise. As we got down we glazed at the star studded sky and a gentle breeze blowing into us from the lakeside. After walking a while in the dark we heard the calls of Savanna nightjar, Jerdon's nightjar and Jungle nightjar. The calls slowly faded as the first rays of light came in the area- and what a pleasure for the eyes.

The combination of rising sun, still water and soothing breeze was just exceptionally beautiful. The lake was flanked by undulating hills and a clear blue sky which added to the beauty. With a dry land habitat adjacent to a vast water body, The Pakhal lake area is a birder's delight supporting a plethora of bird species. On one side of the trail were Northern pintails, common pochards, lesser whistling teals open-billed storks, little cormorants and black headed ibis and on the other side were crested serpent eagle, crested hawk eagle and Common Kestrel.

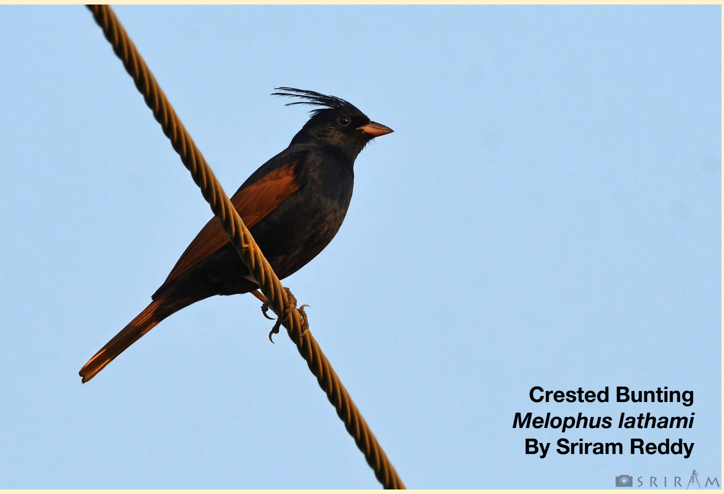
Of all the cute little birds, chestnut-headed bee-eater marked its presence in full glory. There were a bunch of busy breakfast hunters among the smaller trees. The picturesque landscape and encounter with more and more species kept us agile throughout. Entire trail was set in commotion by alexandrine parakeets, brahminy starlings and common mynas and there was a constant flux of all kinds of birds. Some of the other lifers for me were verditer flycatcher, paradise flycatcher and white eyed buzzard. Personally, birding with two adept birders (Gopal and Sriram) was a great learning experience. A couple of anecdotes came back as a souvenir from the trip.

Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*
By Sriram Reddy

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*
By Sriram Reddy

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater ***Merops leschenaulti***
By Sriram Reddy

After a small lunch break, we headed to another site about a mile away from the lake. Owls are farsighted, but so were we. It takes skill to spot a spotted owlet sitting on a far off tree, while you are driving the car on a rough road. However, the owlet was wise enough to jump inside the hollow bark before we could capture it. Nevertheless, these birds made our day. Amongst other birds that added to the fascination were long-tailed shrikes, prinias, munias, redstart and starlings. We explored several sites around the lake and all the places were flourishing with diverse species of birds. Just as we were examining the paddy fields in the region, a surprise was sitting on an overhead wire. It was one of those days when all your good deeds were being paid off. A lovely black crest, a maroon beak and wings awaited us. And it was a crested bunting sitting leisurely facing the sun. In a way, it was photo shoot ready and gave us sufficient time to admire it. There is nothing more we could ask for. A great view and a lovely place for a start, a fulfilling birding day and a splendid evening.



Crested Bunting
Melophus lathami
By Sriram Reddy

It is said that spirituality is laughter, it is joy, and it is fun. No matter what age or place a birder belongs to, watching birds is an act of spirituality for all of us. We never know, how many unexpected surprises are waiting to be discovered. The trip to Pakhal lake, has ignited my passion to explore more. If the first trip in Telangana was this ecstatic, I am sure the ones coming next are going to be equally thrilling.

https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S43168881

Oriental Honey-buzzard
Pernis ptilorhynchus
By Sriram Reddy

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher
Cyornis tickelliae
By Sriram Reddy

Bird Rescue

Do’s & Don’ts

The thrill and the excitement we experience while watching birds also demands a sense of responsibility towards these adorable creatures. Several human activities can cause unintended harm to birds. It is a matter of utmost concern that we stay informed to not harm them and stay equipped to rescue them in case of emergency. A birder with time, admires not only its presence but the behaviour and style as well. Birding gradually metamorphoses into concern for the safety of the birds and their habitats. It is natural for a person who spends time watching birds to react if a bird in danger. The concern birders nurture in their minds, if it takes a proper shape would make us a conservationist-birder and a rescuer.

Before rescue, let us talk about the legal issues with respect to handling or keeping of wild beings, be it birds or animals. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 prohibits keeping of any wild birds which are enlisted in Schedule IV of the act as captive and doing so could earn you up to a 6-year imprisonment. Also keeping of undisclosed wild bird stuffings, antlers or ivory items are also banned under the wildlife protection act. Wildlife rehabilitators, mainly authorized NGOs and recognized government organizations, examine and diagnose for rescue and treatment of injured birds. On approaching the wild animal or bird one should consult or bring in their presence before taking decisions. Let me remind you that there is just a thin line between a hunter/poacher and a rescuer. Proper knowledge of the status of a bird will help you smoothly focus on the rescue of a bird.

Danger is a rather meekly explained word for the survival of our winged friends in the cities. As the urbanization and loss of habitat is rapid, it is increasingly common to see a bird getting into trouble. For example, fast flying birds, in spite of their superior vision, sometimes crash on to transparent window panes. The ultra-thin and sharp plastic thread used for flying kites when littered all over trees entangle the birds who come to perch. The fishing nets unintentionally entrap many of the waders and wagtails on the lakeshores. The most commonly used perch - the overhead electric wires acts as a paralyzer or a death trap for the innocent flying birds. Let us emphasize upon what is to be done when one encounters any sight of a bird in a similar kind of distress.

Bird Rescue

Do’s & Don’ts

General Situations

Approach

- Analyze the situation
- Do not crowd around the bird or get very close unprepared.

Handling

- Minimal handling is the key to a good rescue.
- Never handle a bird with bare hands. Wild birds perceive humans as a threat and makes them agitated when approached, they might attack or go into a shock.
- Put a towel on the bird covering the eyes and slowly hold it by getting the wings close to body, so that they cease panic flapping and getting further injured in process.
- Never try to bring the beak or talons close to your face as there is a risk of them poking your eyes. Your safety is very important.
- Never allow them to stand on your fingers or hands, they grip very tightly when scared causing pain to you.
- Once you hold the bird using a towel, move it to the container at the earliest.
- Place a cloth along with the bird inside the container.

Container:

- Prepare a container, preferably a big cardboard box with enough space for the bird to spread wings and move around.
- The box should have some holes for aeration especially when transport is required.

Basic first aid

- The best mantra to save a wildlife is as said before- “Minimal handling”.
- Move the contained bird to a shady place which is not too cold.
- Do not put the injured bird in air conditioned situations. Birds cannot witstand sudden changes in temperature.
- Do not feed any food or water. Wait for the bird to calm down.
- Take the bird to a nearby vet/expert or call for help.

Bird Rescue

Do's & Don'ts

Some situations you can come across where birds require your help:

Situation 1: When a bird is stuck in disposed materials like Chinese kite flying threads, fishing nets near the shoreline, amidst plastic waste etc.

Action: If you see such a bird , DO NOT rush to the location. Try to assess the possibilities of safety. Sometimes a bird can be stuck over places where water is deep, or slushy soil or on high branch of tree. In those situations, try to approach the bird safely. Your safety is of utmost priority. Immobilize the bird to prevent further injury. If the wings and body of a bird is entangled in the net, first cover the eyes of the bird using a towel and use a small paper scissor and carefully remove the net. Don't shake or move the bird while doing this. Some birds have very delicate wings so be careful. Do not hesitate to call the experts to handle these situations.

Situation 2: Injures or broken wings

Action: Sometimes birds gets blinded by crashing into window panes of buildings or they may fly directly on to the wall and get severely injured. Bird can get injured when they are attacked by other animals. Do not interfere if a bird is being predated by other animal or a bird, it is a natural. Your interference is only required if a bird is harmed unnaturally.

For a bird with heavy bleeding injuries apply some pressure on the wound to control the bleeding. Follow the steps of handling the bird and rush to hospital. As the birds with heavy blood loss tend to dehydrate rather quickly and can even succumb to the situation. It is always advisable to take them to a vet or hand over to experts, as people who worked with wildlife can handle the situations in a better way to save the life of the bird. Bird watching and rescuing a bird are two entirely different things altogether. An expert bird identifier may not necessarily have right experience to save a bird. Knowing the basic rescue methods can help a birdwatcher save the birds in the right way.

Minimal handling of a bird in trauma as said before is the key to save its life. Birds or animals have high will power to sustain the injuries and pain. So a logical approach is needed rather than an emotional one. Being emotional can make you take the wrong steps which could lead to more damage. Being a responsible birder, you need to be alert always and do not hesitate to take suggestions from the experienced or inform them if you come across a similar situation.

Bird Rescue

Do's & Don'ts

Some situations you can come across where birds require your help:

Situation 3: Sunstroke

Action : Sunstroke can be seen in birds too. In such situations move the bird to shade. Wrap the bird with wet towel. Sprinkle some water so that the body temperature comes to normal. Do not force to feed anything. Give some electrolytes if the bird takes it voluntarily.

What you could always do:

1. Must haves- a soft dry towel, paper scissors and a first-aid kit.
2. Keep contacts of Vets and wildlife experts in handy.
3. Carry a water bottle and a foldable cardboard box (if you have room for it)

Important Contacts Numbers:

Telangana Forest Department :
1800 425 5364 (Toll Free)

Friends of Snakes:
8374233366

Animal Warriors India:
9121531317 (Wildlife Rescue Team)

***Note:** Hyderabad birding pals gives equal importance to rescue of these creatures along with birding that we do. The pleasure of successfully rescuing one is truly rewarding. Wherever you are in and find a similar situation please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We have a handful of experienced wildlife rescuers and vets who are always willing to help whenever required. Long live our flying friends.*

Written By

Pradeep Nair

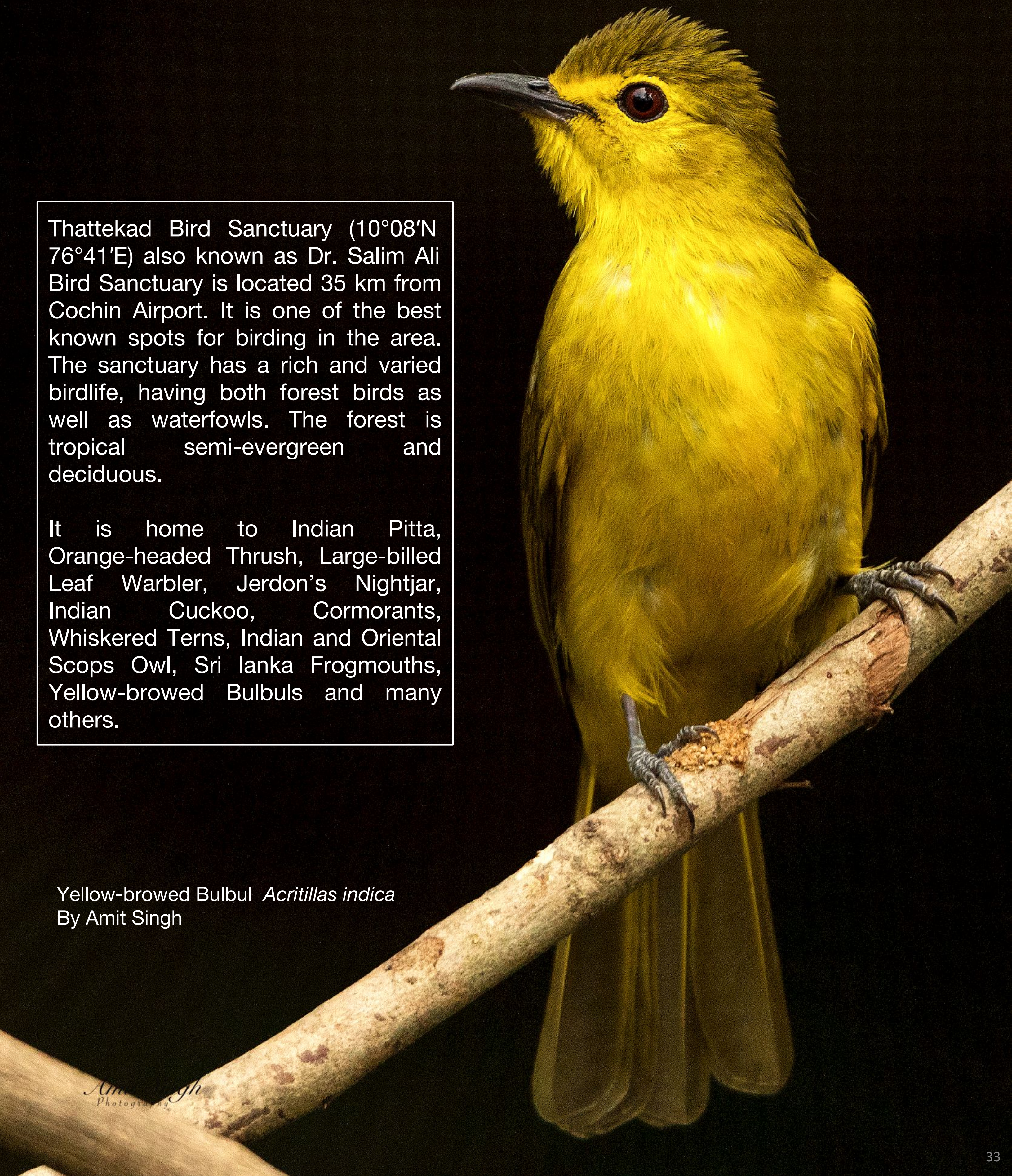
Gopalakrishna Iyer

Thattekad Bird Sanctuary A Trip Report

By Amit Singh

Thattekad Bird Sanctuary (10°08′N 76°41′E) also known as Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary is located 35 km from Cochin Airport. It is one of the best known spots for birding in the area. The sanctuary has a rich and varied birdlife, having both forest birds as well as waterfowls. The forest is tropical semi-evergreen and deciduous.

It is home to Indian Pitta, Orange-headed Thrush, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Jerdon’s Nightjar, Indian Cuckoo, Cormorants, Whiskered Terns, Indian and Oriental Scops Owl, Sri lanka Frogmouths, Yellow-browed Bulbuls and many others.



Yellow-browed Bulbul *Acritillas indica*
By Amit Singh

It was a long pending trip which I finally made in January 2018 along with my friends Soumitra Ghosh and Sanjoy Adak. We booked our stay at Eldhose Birding Lodge 3 months in advance. My flight from Hyderabad was at 6pm on 25th Jan 2018 and I reached Cochin airport at 8:15pm. My other two friends started their journey from Bangalore and they too reached Cochin airport around the same time.

Mr. Eldhose had already sent tempo traveller for our pickup from the airport and we reached Thattekad by 10pm. We had a plan of two full day trip (26th and 27th January) and our return flight was on 28th Jan morning.

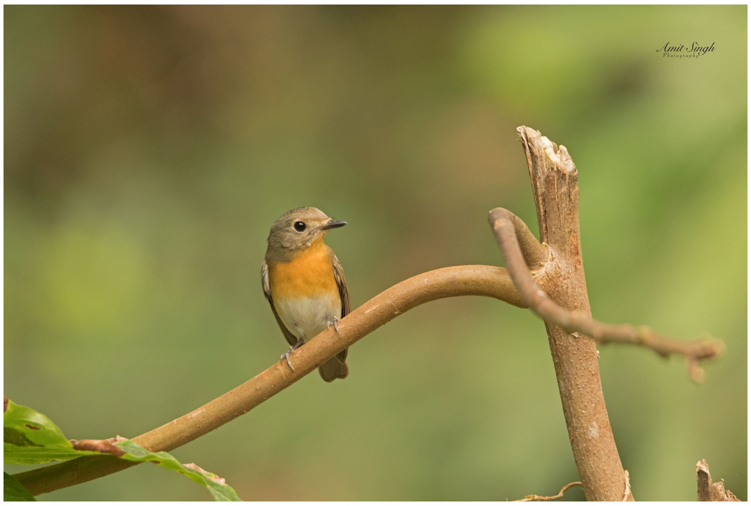
The team with Mr. Eldhose (Second from left)

Day 1

Soon after having our breakfast we started for the jungle trail. After 6 km ride in tempo traveller we reached to a point from where we had to go by walk. I was all set with my Canon 5DM4 body, Tamron 150-600mm G2 lens and backup Canon 7DM2 body.

The moment we got down from the vehicle, we saw Malabar parakeet (*Psittacula columboides*), Southern hill myna (*Gracula religiosa*), Jungle babbler (*Turdoides striata*) and many other common birds.

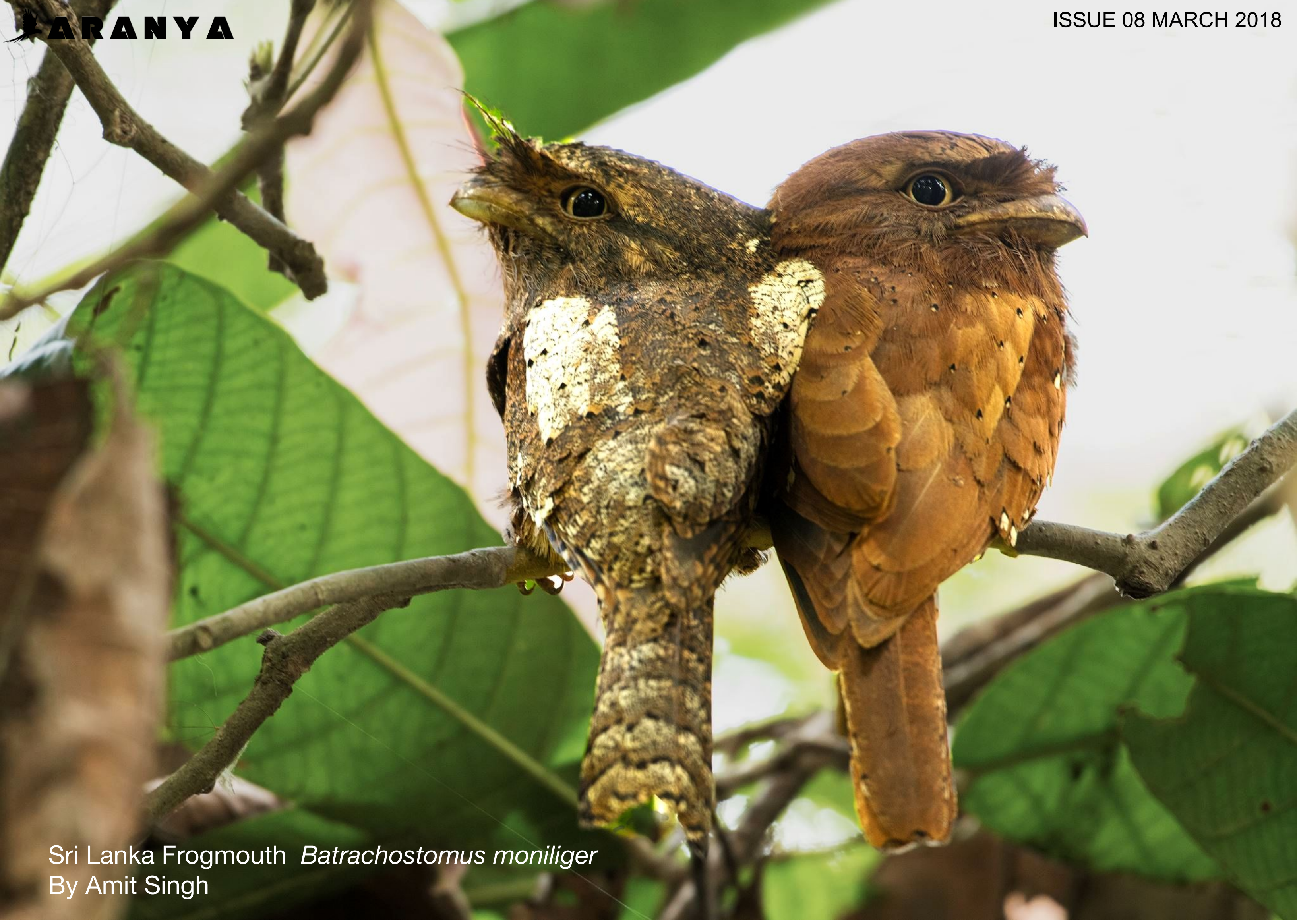
We moved ahead and after 10 min walk we spotted Ceylon frogmouth also known as Sri Lanka frogmouth *(Batrachostomus moniliger)*. After getting some good shots we continued ahead and spotted many other species like Hornbills *(Bucerotidae sp.)*, Black-rumped flameback *(Dinopium benghalense)*, also known as the lesser golden-backed woodpecker or lesser goldenback, Rufous treepie *(Dendrocitta vagabunda)*, Coppersmith barbet *(Megalaima haemacephala)*, a group of Chestnut-headed bee-eater *(Merops leschenaultia)*, Black-naped Monarch *(Hypothymis azurea)*, Flame throated Bulbul *(Pycnonotus gularis)*, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher *(Cyornis pallipes)*.



White-bellied Blue Flycatcher (*Cyornis pallipes*) Female

Our field expert told us that this is the best season to spot Black Baza (*Aviceda leuphotes*) so he took us to some other part of forest where there was a high chance to spot Baza but the luck was not in our favor and we couldn't spot any.

We came back to our resort for lunch break. After having awesome lunch, we again started for our second trip for the day. After 5kms ride in tempo traveller we reached to place which was quite dense. As instructed by our field guide we decided to sit at one place peacefully and wait for birds as there was a small water storage and birds come there to drink water. After 30 mins of wait birds started coming.



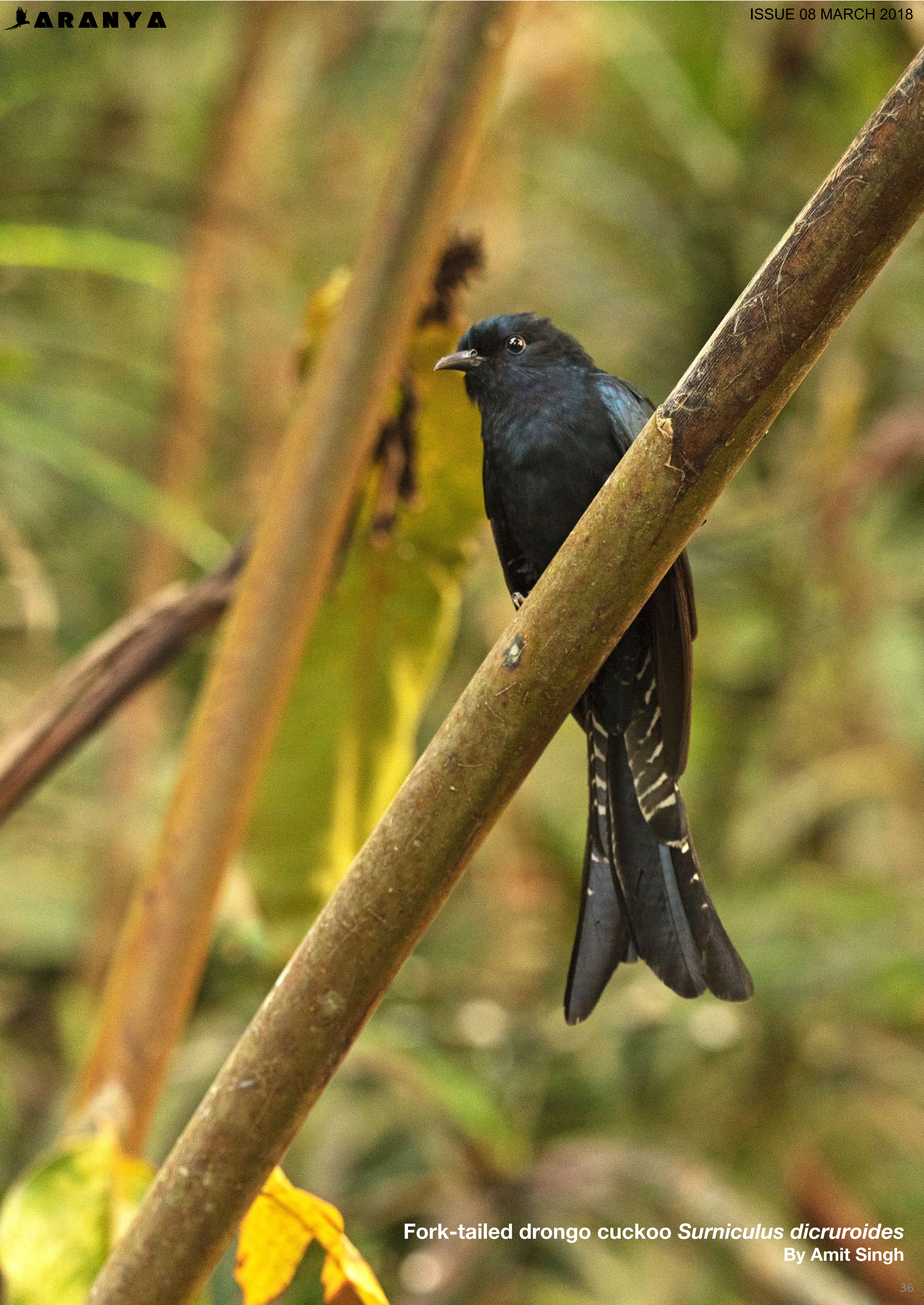
Sri Lanka Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*
By Amit Singh

We spotted Yellow browed bulbul (*Acritillas indica*), Western Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), Blue-throated blue flycatcher female (*Cyornis rubeculoides*), Rusty tailed flycatcher (*Muscicapa ruficauda*), Fork-tailed drongo-cuckoo (*Surniculus dicruroides*), Chestnut-tailed starling (*Sturnia malabarica*), Asian fairy-bluebird (*Irena puella*), Orange-headed Thrush (*Geokichla citrina*), Indian pitta (*Pitta brachyura*), Little Spiderhunter *(Arachnothera longirostra)*, Red-vented bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*), Paradise flycatcher (*Terpsiphone*), Tickell's blue flycatcher (*Cyornis tickelliae*), Greater racket-tailed drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*), Malabar whistling thrush (*Myophonus horsfieldii*).

I had never sighted so many birds in one day so it was definitely an awesome experience for me. I felt like I have reached in birds' paradise. Slowly it started getting dark so we had to come back to resort.

After reaching to our resort, I had a shower and post dinner we again started our night trail in search of owl and nightjars. After 10 minute walk from our resort, we spotted Mottled wood owl (*Strix ocellata*). As we were tired after a hectic day trip we decided to go back to our room to sleep.

Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra*
By Amit Singh



Fork-tailed drongo cuckoo *Surniculus dicruroides*

By Amit Singh

Day 2

Second day we started with full enthusiasm. After having heavy breakfast, we sat in tempo traveller to start our second day trip.

Our field guide told us that if we are going to the same section of forest where we went yesterday to see Baza, the possibility is very high to spot it during morning hours. After everyone's mutual consent we decided to go to the same place.

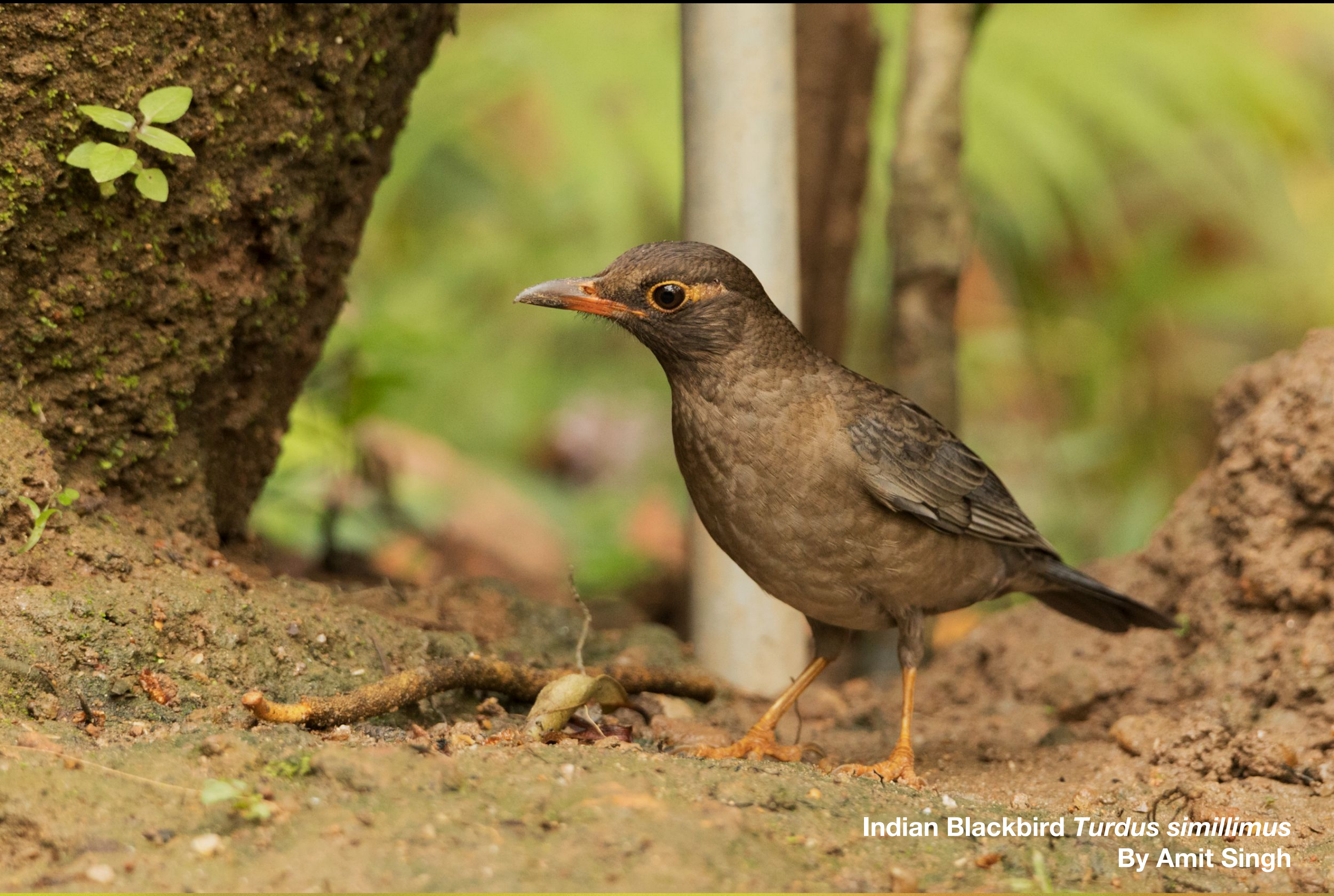
We reached forest after 7 km ride and started searching for Baza. The moment we entered in forest we spotted Brown fish owl (*Bubo zeylonensis*). After taking some good shots we moved ahead and spotted Black-rumped flameback (*Dinopium benghalense*), Heart-spotted woodpecker (*Hemicircus canente*), White-bellied treepie (*Dendrocitta leucogastra*).

Again after 10 min walk finally we got a glimpse of Black Baza (*Aviceda leuphotes*). There were total 3 in count but they were too far to get a nice shot. We just got a record shot of Black Baza which was eating a Grasshopper (*Caelifera*). We waited for almost an hour to get a nice shot but the day was not in our favor.

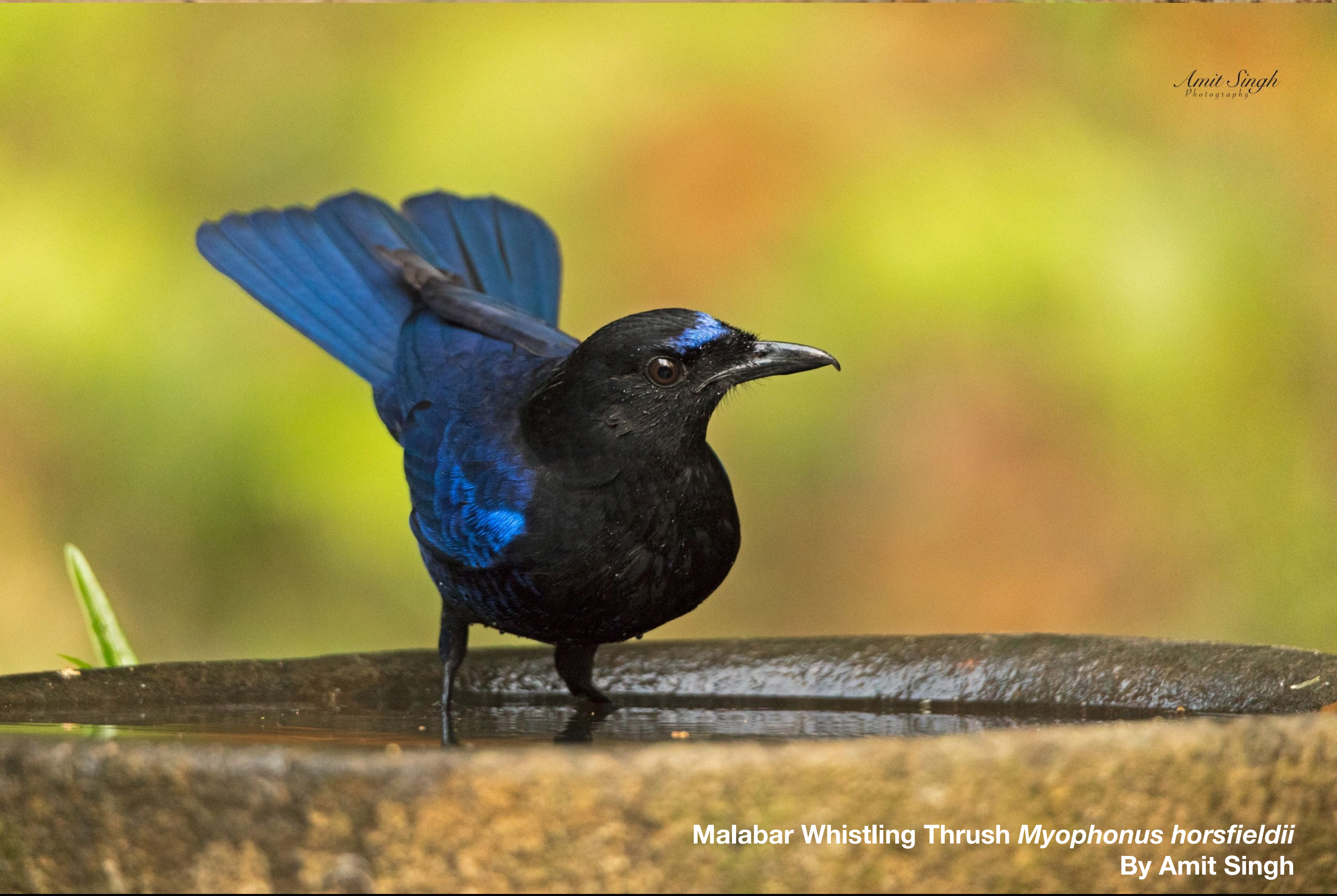
We decided to move ahead in search of Malabar trogon (*Harpactes fasciatus*). On our way back, we spotted Jungle owlet (*Glaucidium radiatum*).

Our journey continued and we reached to some other section of the forest. We started searching for on the most beautiful bird – Malabar Trogon. After couple of hide and seek we spotted a pair of Malabar trogon (*Harpactes fasciatus*). We also spotted Indian giant squirrel (*Ratufa indica*) which was jumping from one tree of branch to another. I got a nice shot of it.

Mottled wood owl *Strix ocellata*
By Amit Singh



Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus*
By Amit Singh


Amit Singh
Photography

Malabar Whistling Thrush *Myophonus horsfieldii*
By Amit Singh

Amit Singh Photography

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*
By Amit Singh

After spending couple of hours, we decided to go back to resort for lunch. On the way back, my friend Soumitra spotted a male Sri Lanka frogmouth along with juvenile frogmouth.

We reached resort for lunch and post that we started for our second trip of the day. Second half of the day we spotted White cheeked barbet (*Megalaima viridis*), Asian fairy-bluebird (*Irena puella*), Oriental magpie-robin female (*Copsychus saularis*), Fork tailed drongo (*Surniculus lugubris*), Greater coucal (*Centropus sinensis*), Junglefowl (*Gallus*), White-bellied treepie (*Dendrocitta leucogastra*), Tickell's blue flycatcher (*Cyornis tickelliae*), Yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), White-throated kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), Hornbill (*Bucerotidae sp.*), Greater racket-tailed drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*), Woodpecker (*Picidae sp.*), Indian blackbird female (*Turdus simillimus nigropileus*).

We reached back to resort around 7pm. As I had seen few birds for the first time so I was verifying the names with my friends.

After dinner, we decided to go for a night trail again. Even though we were tired, then also we decided to go ahead in search of some nocturnal species.

We sat down in tempo traveller and started our night trail journey. After 20 mins ride we reached to place from where we had to go by walk in the forest. This time Mr. Eldhose was our field guide and instructed us to wear shoes as there could be possibility of snake bites in night.

Soon after we started our trail, we spotted Jerdon's Nightjar (*Caprimulgus atripennis)*. We couldn't get enough time to focus light on the bird somehow, I got a record shot of the Jerdon's Nightjar but at very high ISO. It was just a record shot for me.

After 30 min walk in jungle and it was 11pm night time when we spotted Gray slender loris *(Loris lydekkerianus)*. Yes, you read it correctly, it was Gray slender loris. I couldn't believe my eyes as I haven't seen this species before and was pretty much surprised after seeing it. It was truly a dream come true trip for me.

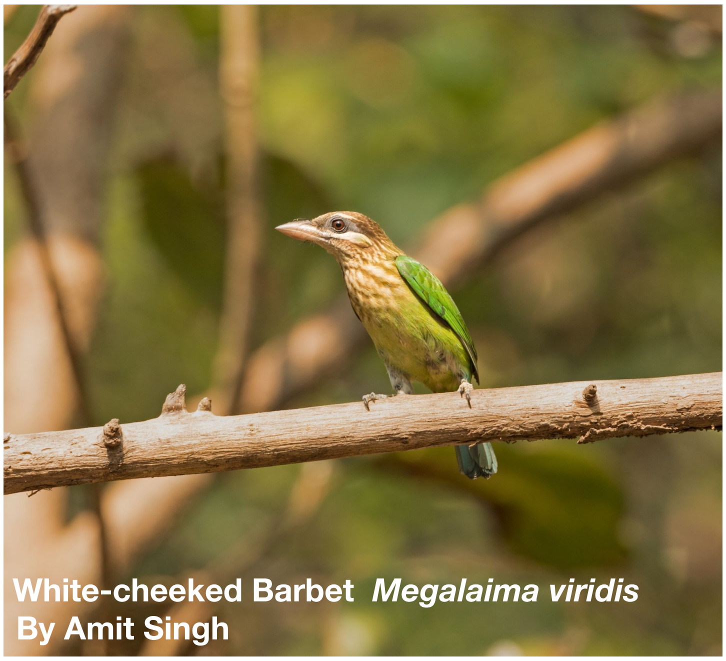
The gray slender loris is a species of primate in the family Loridae. It is found in India and Sri Lanka. Its natural habitats are subtropical or tropical dry forests and subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests.

As the mission was accomplished so we decided to go back to resort. We reached back around 12 midnight and I had a peaceful sleep.

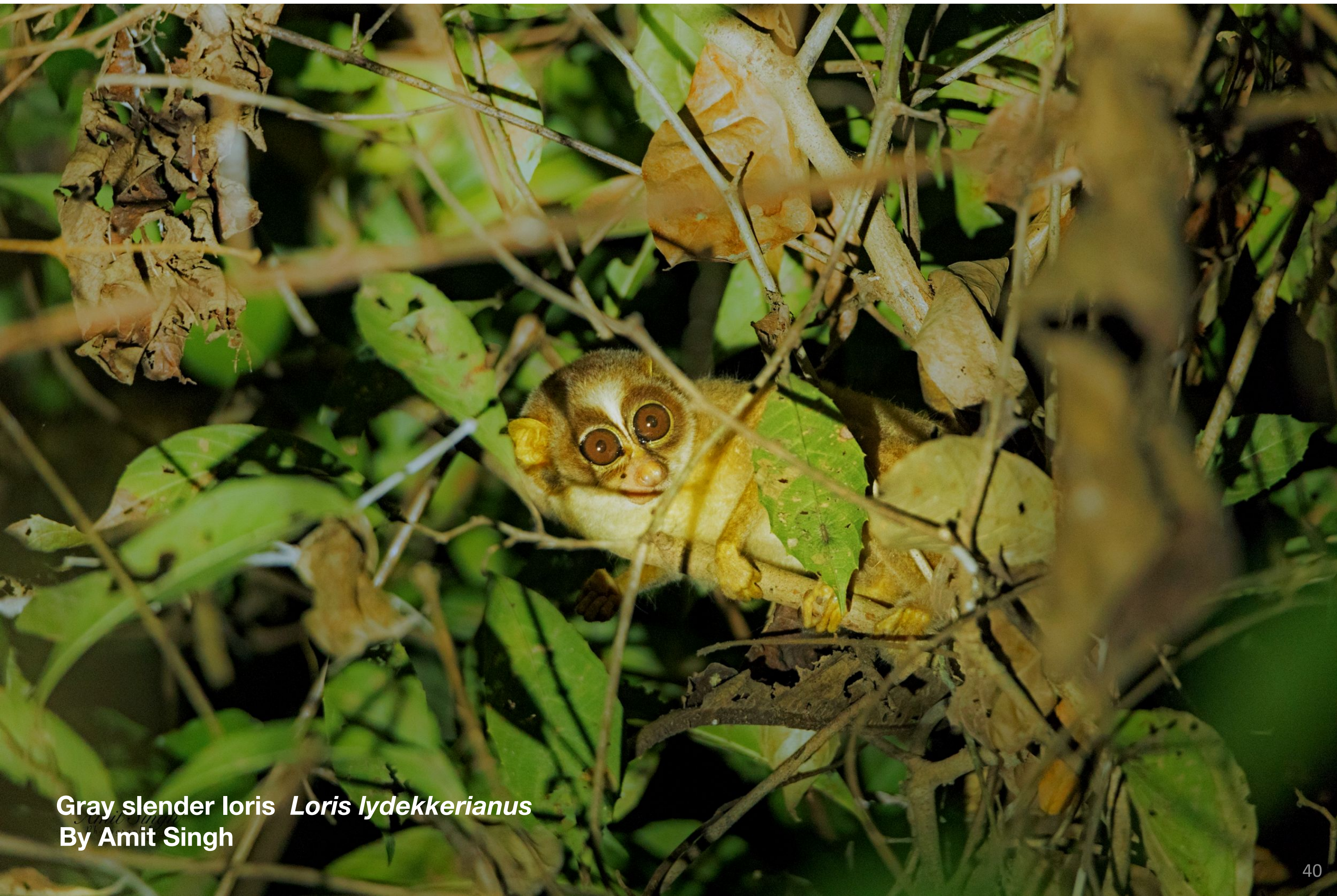
eBird Checklist:
https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S43281602

Day 3 (back to Hyderabad)

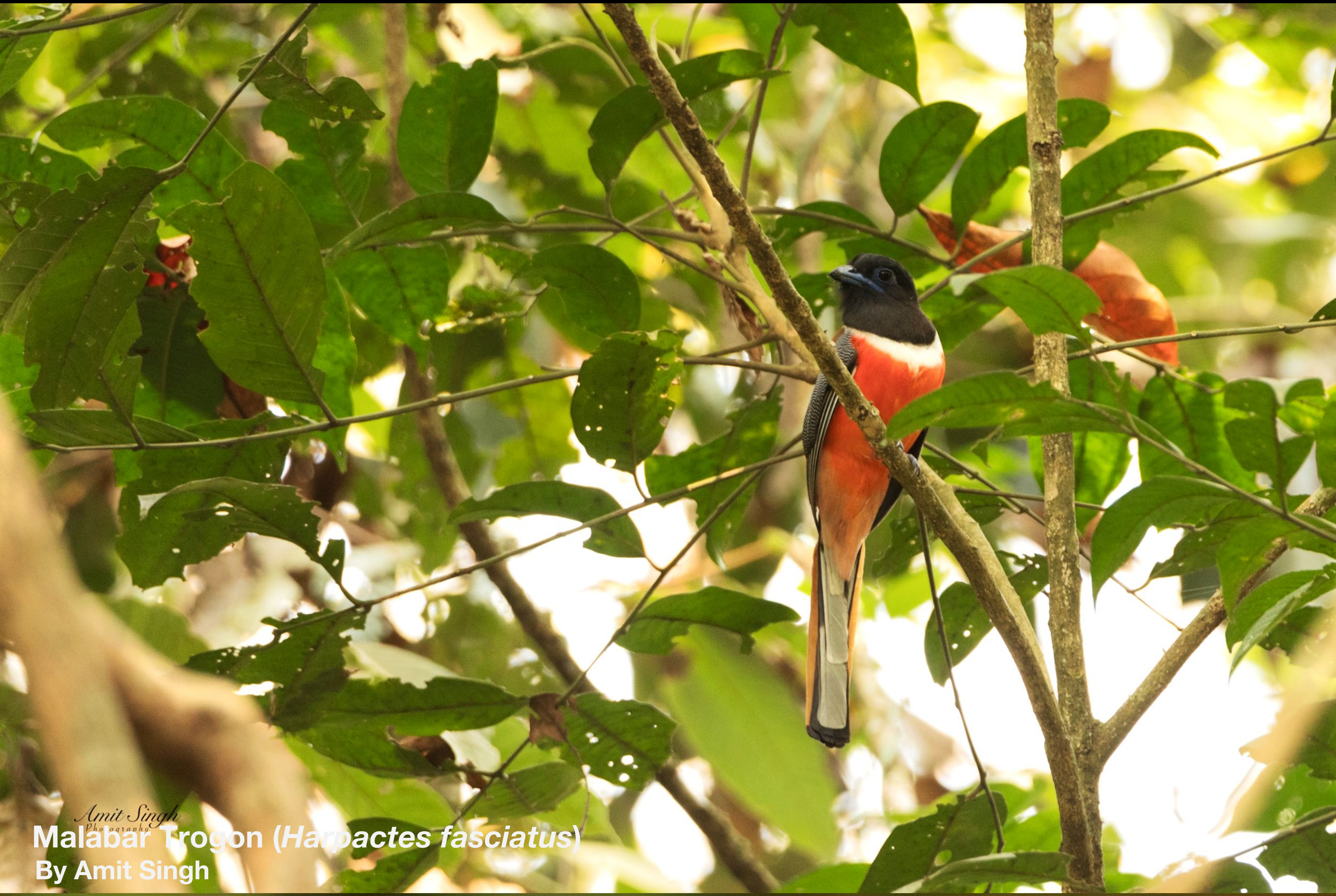
I must say that it was an awesome trip and this is the first time I have ever seen more than 30 species of birds. We finished our breakfast quickly so that we can catch our flight on time from Kochi (Cochin) airport.



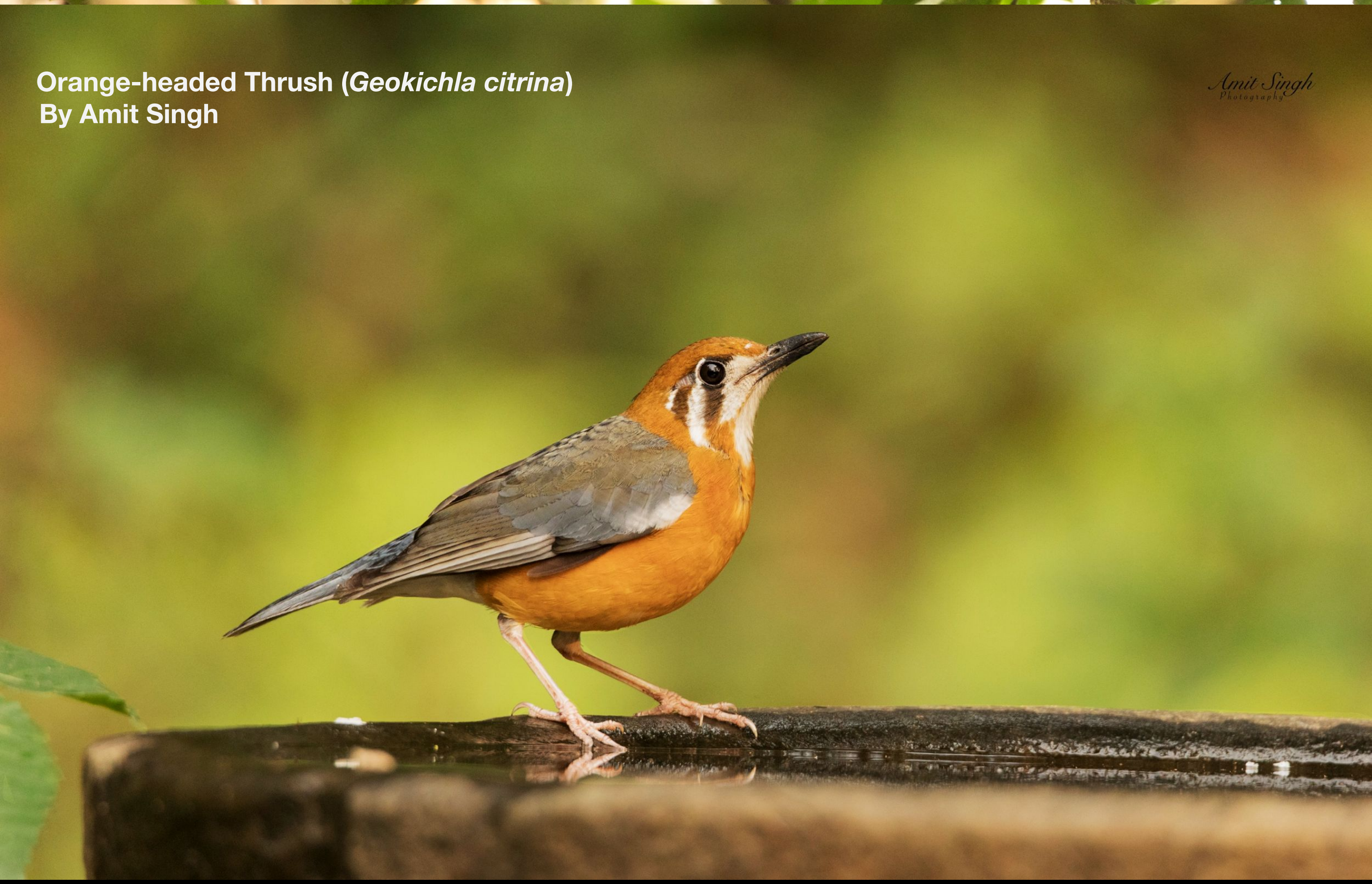
White-cheeked Barbet ***Megalaima viridis***
By Amit Singh



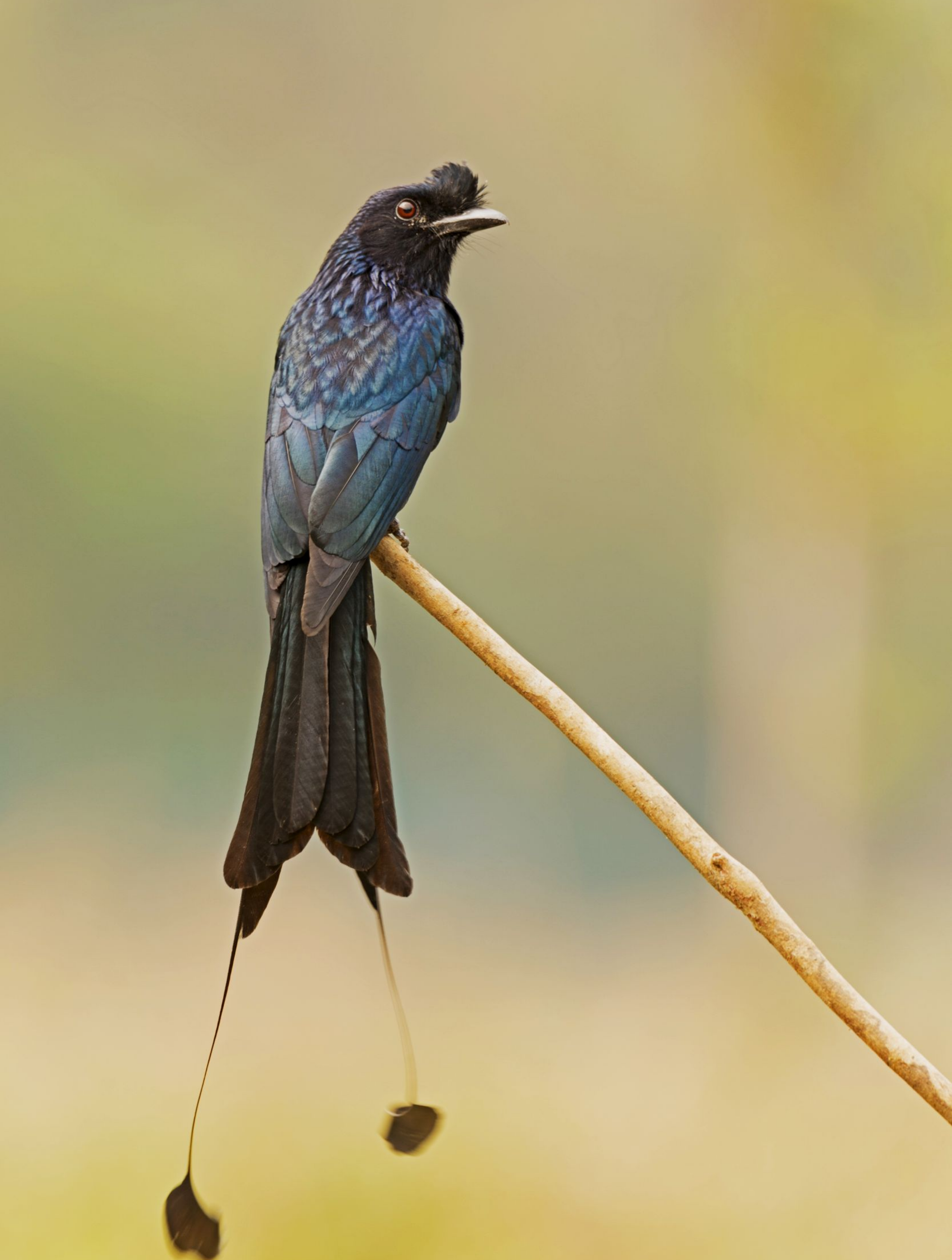
Gray slender loris ***Loris lydekkerianus***
By Amit Singh


Amit Singh
Photography

Malabar Trogon (*Harpactes fasciatus*)
By Amit Singh


Amit Singh
Photography

Orange-headed Thrush (*Geokichla citrina*)
By Amit Singh



Greater racket-tailed drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*

By Amit Singh

What's in My Camera Bag?

Naresh Vadrevu

I'm a database administrator during the week and nature and wildlife photographer on weekends. I Love to shoot everything around me. One fine day I met Mr. Harikrishna Adepu through some online website and he was selling the Opteka 650-1300mm f/8 manual lens (still with me). I bought the lens from him and he told me to join HBP to improve my skills, so I quickly joined and I'm attending bird-walks from past 3 years and I've learned so much about nature, birds and mammals. I've met so many like-minded people and they are teaching me everything about photography and bird watching. In the initial days I used Canon EOS 1000d and Canon 70-300mm Non IS lens. After several years I upgraded my kit to Canon EOS 7D Mark II and Sigma 150-600mm contemporary. Then I attended most HBP bird-walks to improve my knowledge about nature and wildlife.

Style of Photography

I always try to make the photo colourful and eye-catching to the viewer. Most of the times I love to take images of hunting and action in particular. Story-based photographs are the one I like the most. I love to click Owls, Eagles, Falcons and Tigers. “A picture tells thousand words” is my inspirational quote.

How It Started

I love to travel every part in the country. So I decided to capture every moment. Bird-walks are so important to know about other members and they taught fresh concepts every time. Looking at my initial images, they were dull and pathetic but then I improved a lot from the inputs of all the members of HBP. Some of my inspirational fellow birders taught me how to edit the picture with good frames. I'm always thankful to each and every member of our group. Now I'm using Canon 7D Mark II and Sigma 150-600mm Contemporary. The Images are tack sharper and I'm very happy with the results so far.

Canon EOS 7D Mark II

I upgraded my camera from Canon EOS 60D to Canon 7D Mark II which is very effective and tack sharp every picture I take. I use only single point focus for continuous focusing on the subject even in flight mode or in action mode. The shooting speed changes from 6 fps to 10 fps for improving my action photography and resolution also changes from 18 megapixels to 20.5 megapixels.

Canon
EOS 7D
Mark II
CANON ZOOM LENS EF-S 18-135mm 1:3.5-5.6 IS STM
ϕ67mm

Canon EF 300 f/4 L IS USM

The Canon EF 300mm f/4L IS USM Lens is an excellent lens in the Canon L Series. While it has enough focal length to feel long, this very-well-built lens remains relatively small and light. Image quality from the 300 f/4L IS lens is excellent. One of the best lens I used so far, very fast and gives impressive results.

Sigma 150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM Contemporary

This is the most coveted lens among most amateur wildlife photographers, and for a valid reason. The lens is tack sharp through the focal range. The autofocus is very quick and accurate and the bokeh is beautiful. But the most impressive aspect of this lens is the state of the art Vibration Reduction which allows you to take sharp images at shutter speeds as low as 1/30 sec, handheld. Highest F-stop of 6.3 at 600mm is great for those low light situations, though you may find maximum sharpness at f/7.1

Tonba camera backpack camera bag tb669

Tonba Backpack is made with rugged, water-repellent ballistic nylon with a interior that is gear-friendly and won’t harm the fine finish of your equipment. The bottom panel has been made waterproof if you need to set it down on the ground. it’s rated to hold your two pro DSLRs, 6-8 lenses (up to a 300mm f/2.8), monopod and phones. There’s also room for your 17″ laptop held in its own pocket since you’ll always shoot and need to download and transfer ASAP. Dual side pockets are provided for your monopod/tripod. In addition, storage space is plenty including interior padded dividers to configure the guts of the pack to suit your gear and keep it separated and organized. A front accessory pocket is for your small stuff that you always need rapid access to. Side cargo pockets are padded and also readily accessible for additional accessories.

Suggestions to Fellow Wildlife Photographers

Get as close as possible without disturbing your subject. No focal length can match your physical proximity to the subject.

Approach the bird in such a way that you get the best possible background.

Also try to position yourself in such a way that there is as little clutter as possible around the subject.

Remember, changing the angle of your camera or moving a few steps to your right or left can actually have a great impact on the background.

Currently Using Gear

Canon EOS 5D Mark III

Canon EOS 7D Mark II

Canon EF 300mm f/4 IS USM

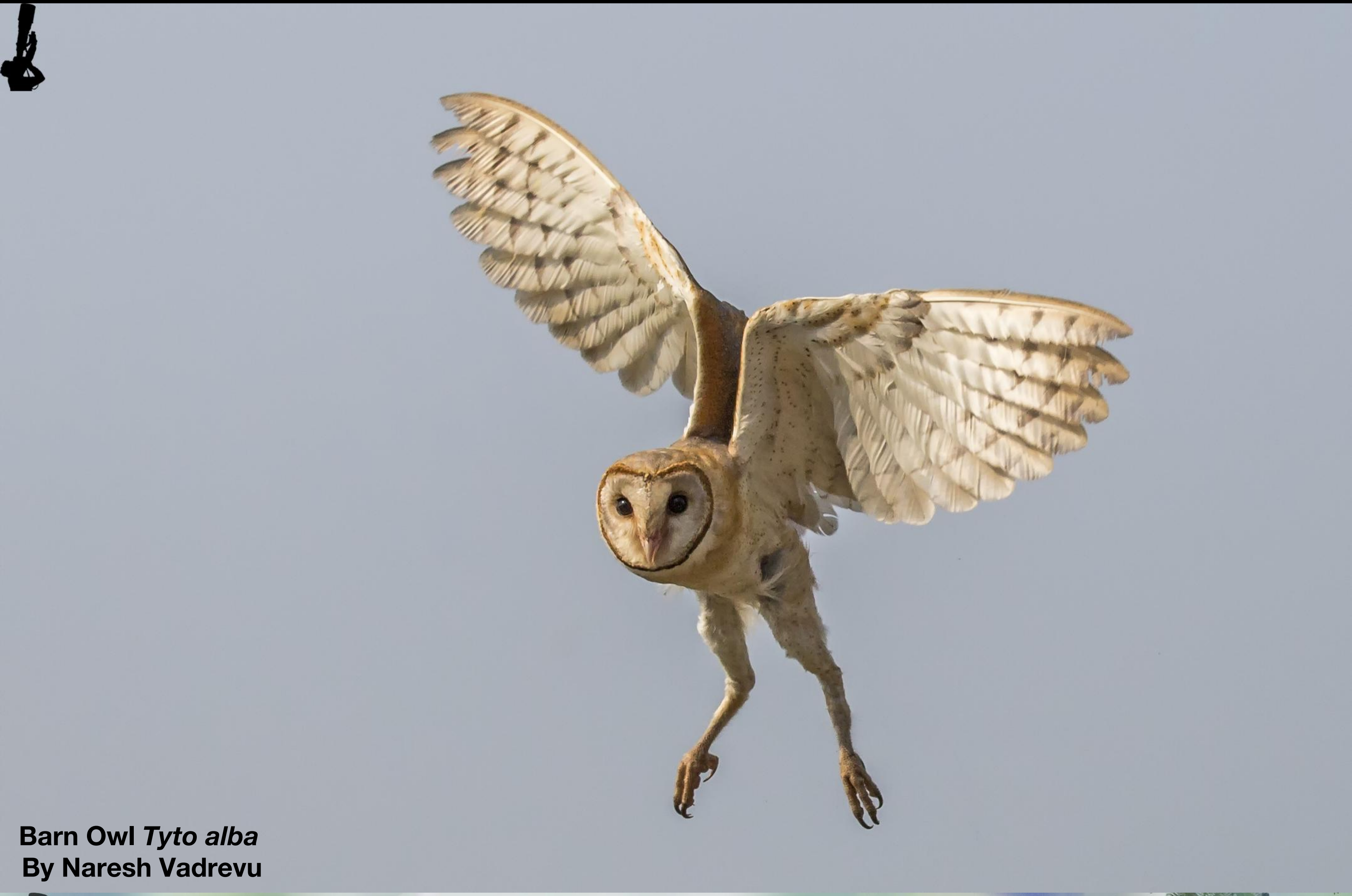
Sigma 150-600mm Contemporary

Canon 50mm

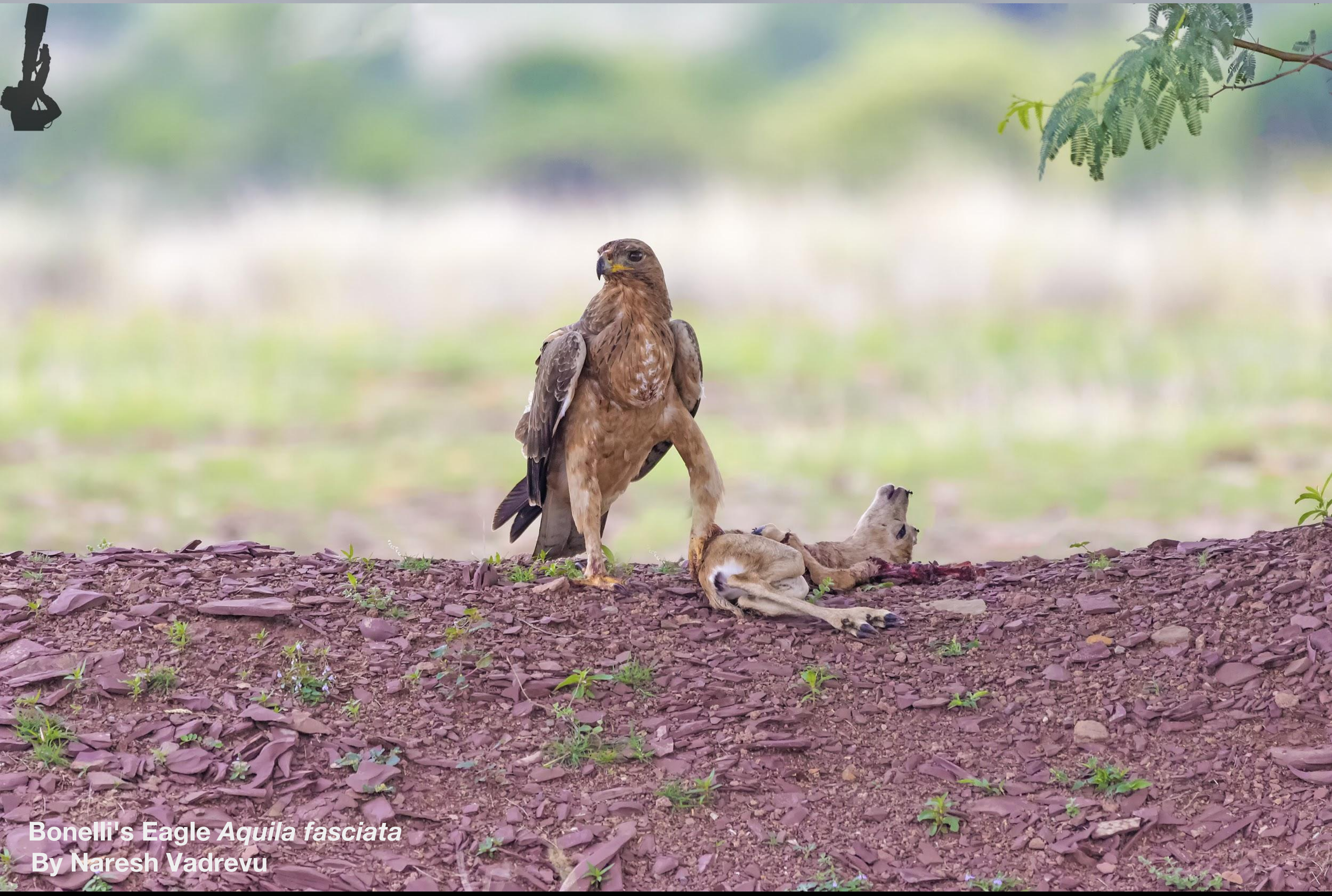
Canon 18-55mm

MI Yi Action Camera with Gorilla Pod

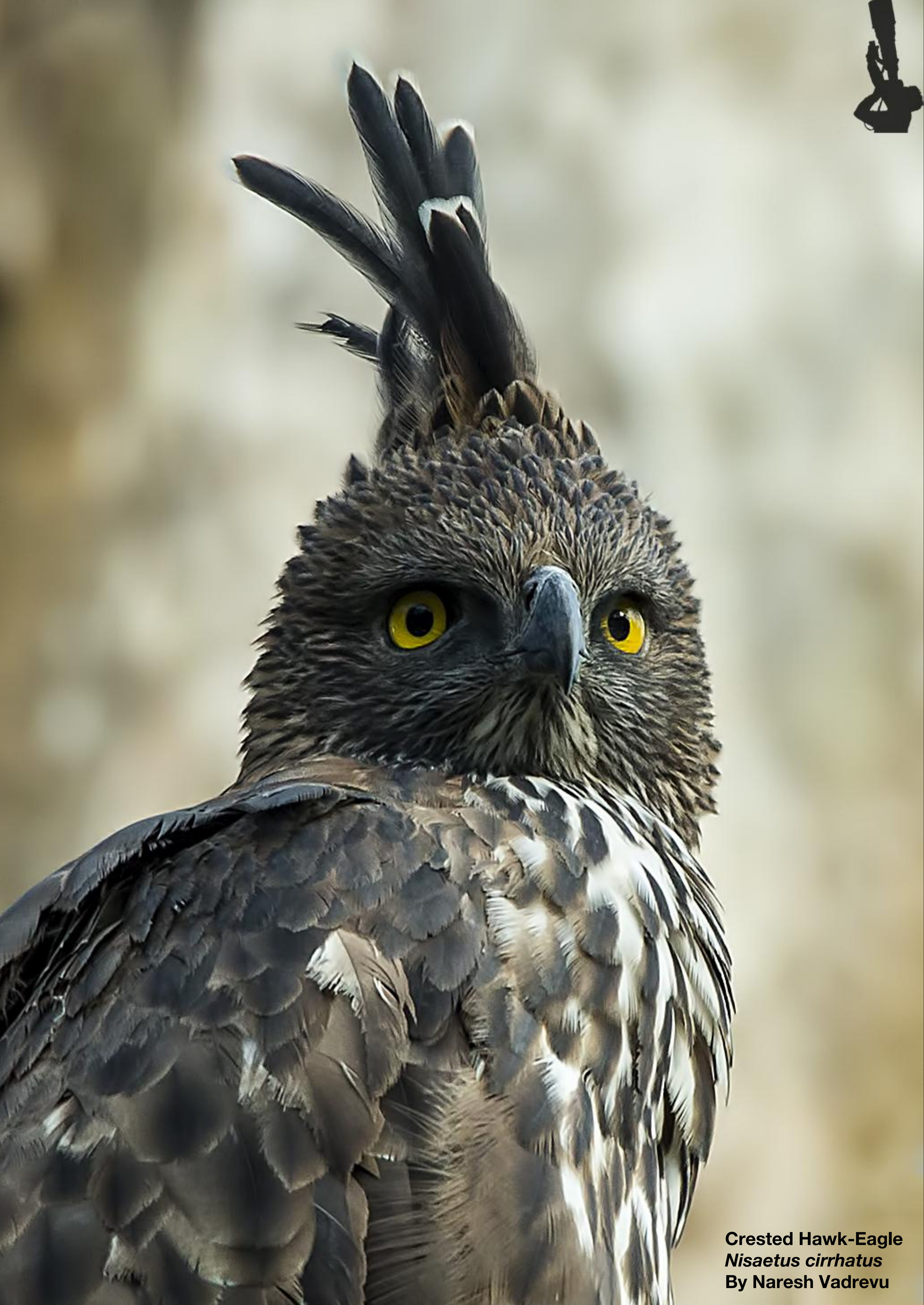
Fotopro Ball-head Tripod



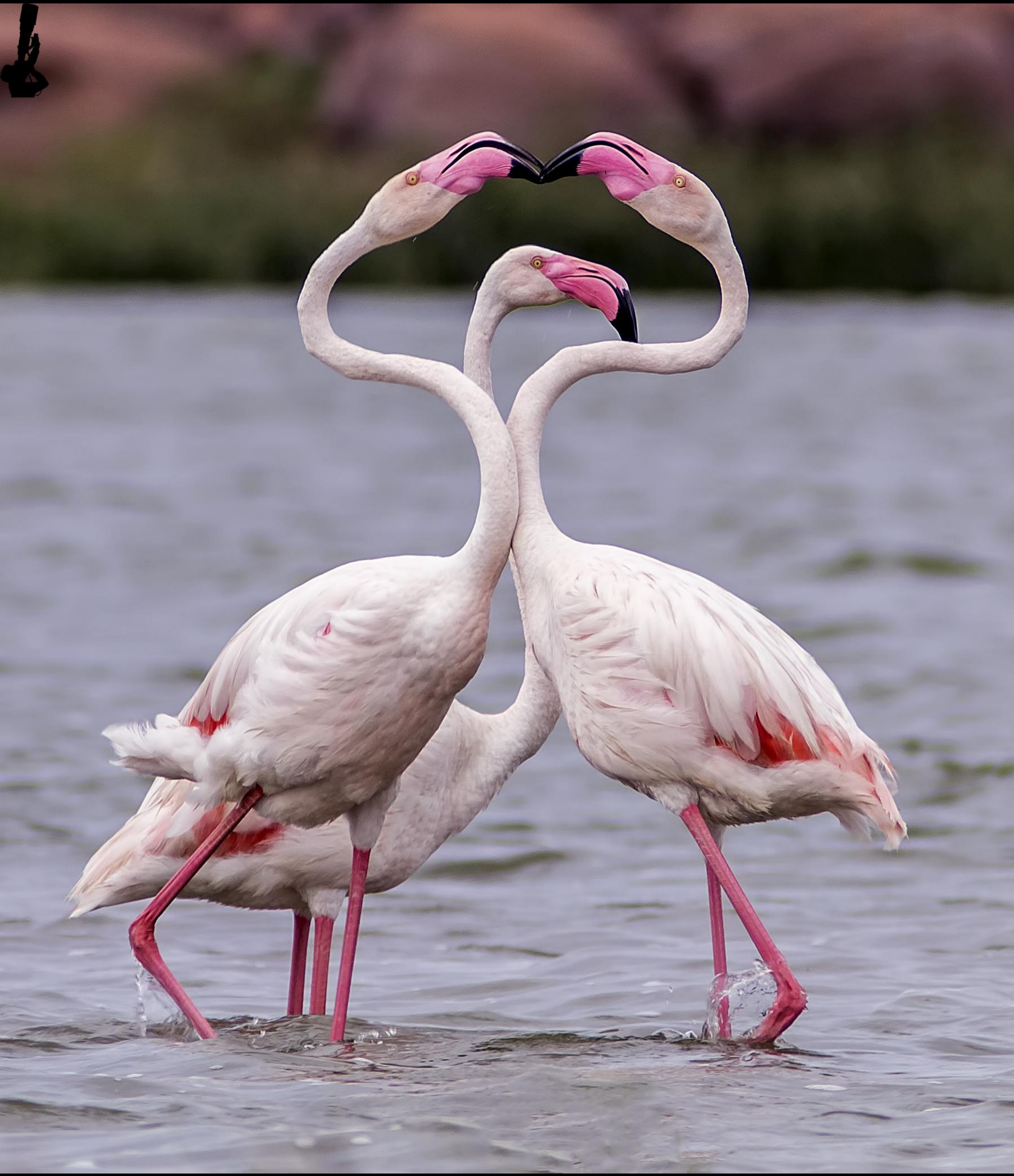
Barn Owl ***Tyto alba***
By Naresh Vadrevu



Bonelli's Eagle ***Aquila fasciata***
By Naresh Vadrevu

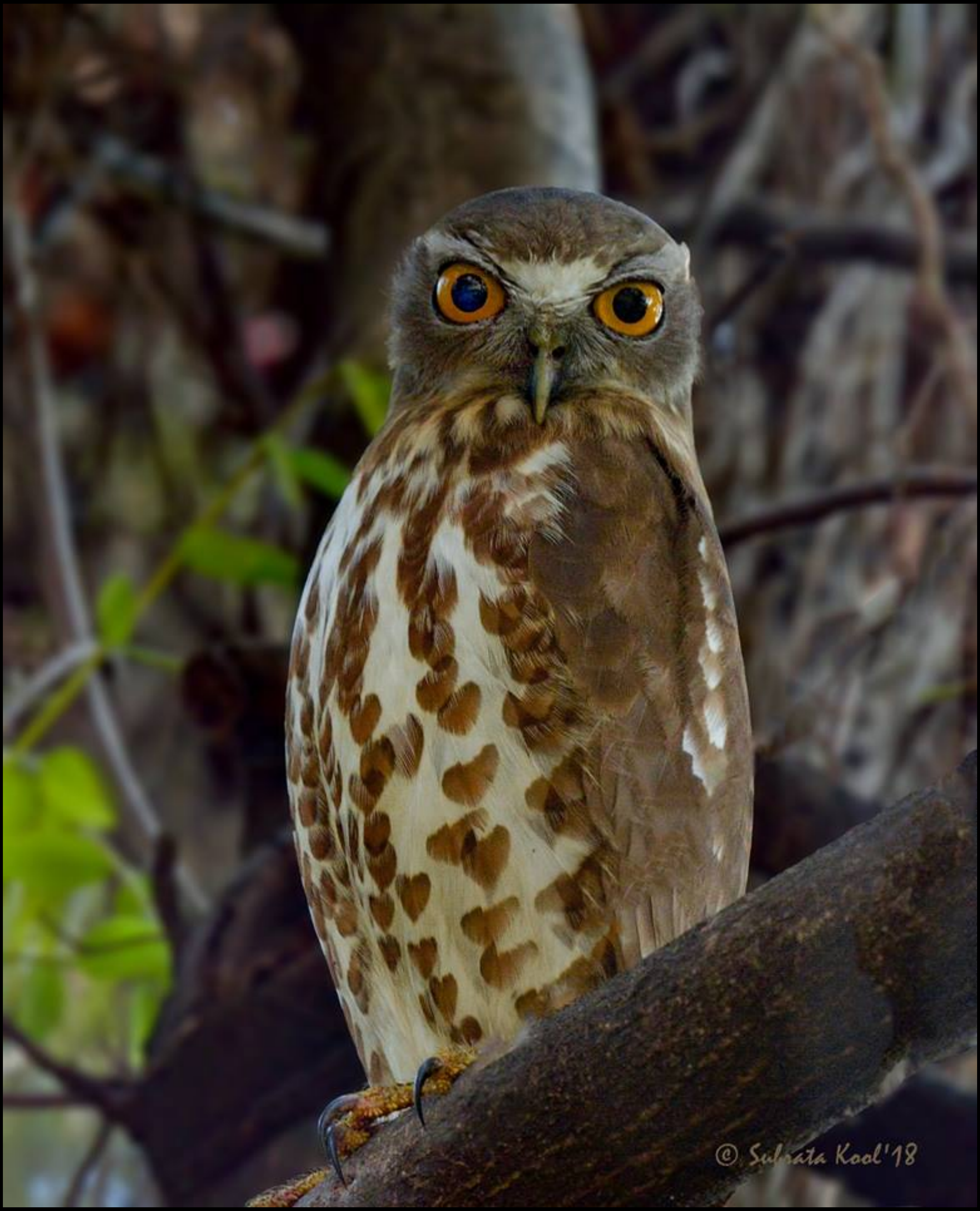


Crested Hawk-Eagle
Nisaetus cirrhatus
By Naresh Vadrevu



Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*
By Naresh Vadrevu

Notable Sightings



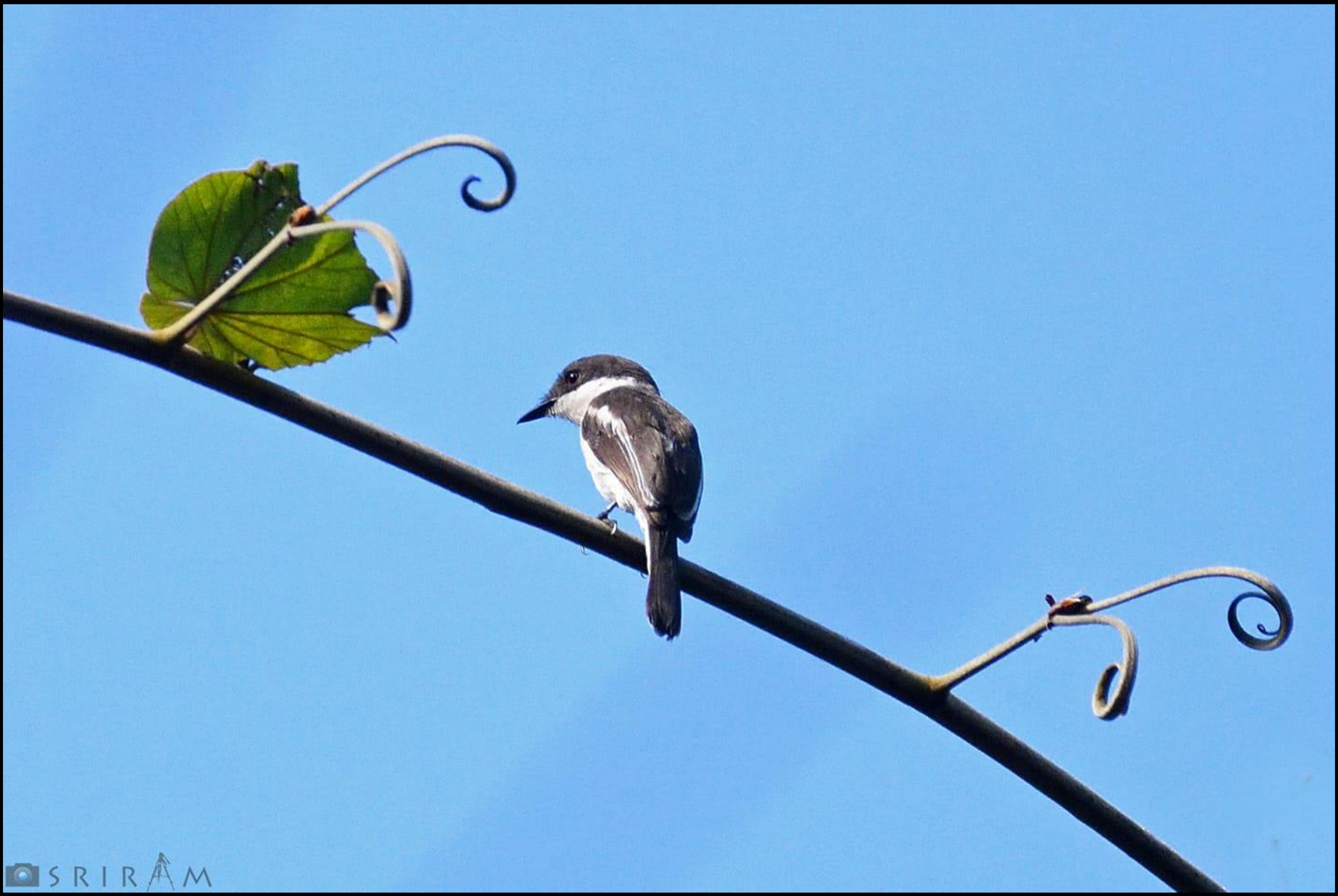
Brown Hawk-owl (*Ninox scutulata*)

© Subrata Kool

Manjeera WLS, Telangana

A difficult bird to see in day time and rare for Telangana region.

Notable Sightings



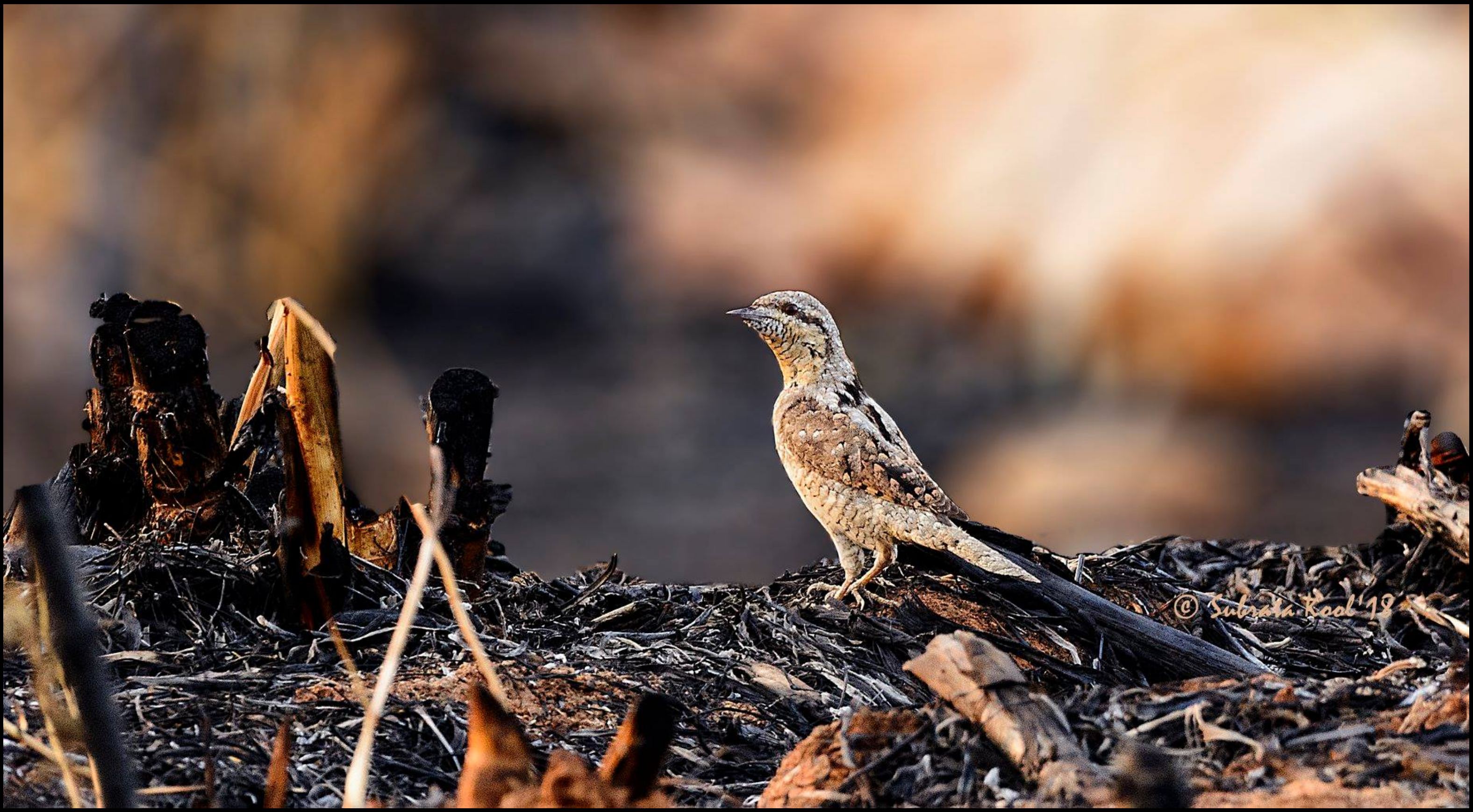
Bar-winged flycatcher-shrike (*Hemipus picatus*)

© Sriram Reddy

Gubbala Mangamma temple, Telangana

A bird which is seen in Telangana after 1990

Notable Sightings



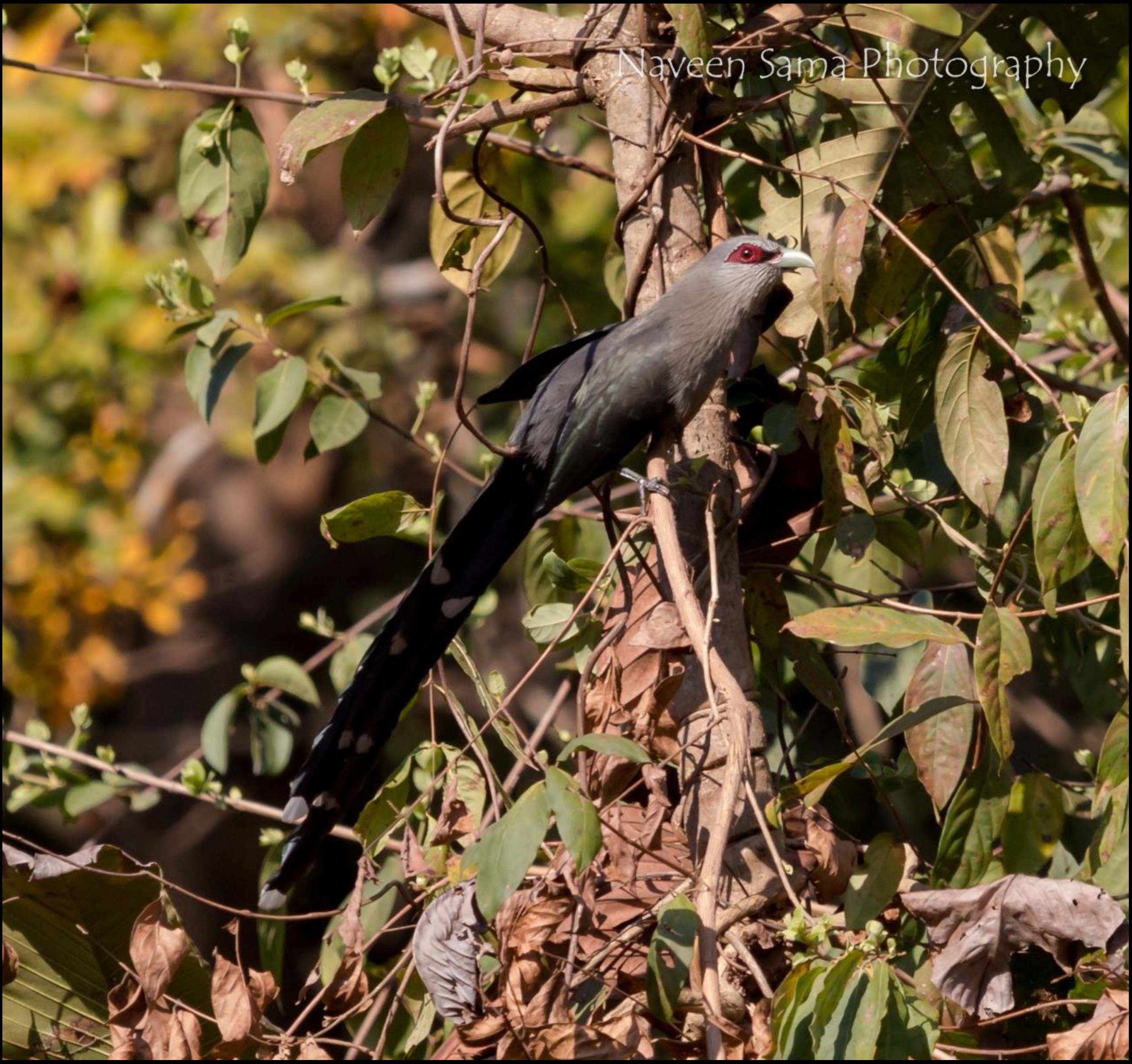
Eurasian Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)

© Subrata Kool

Manjeera WLS, Telangana

This is just the 2nd report from Manjeera after an year

Notable Sightings

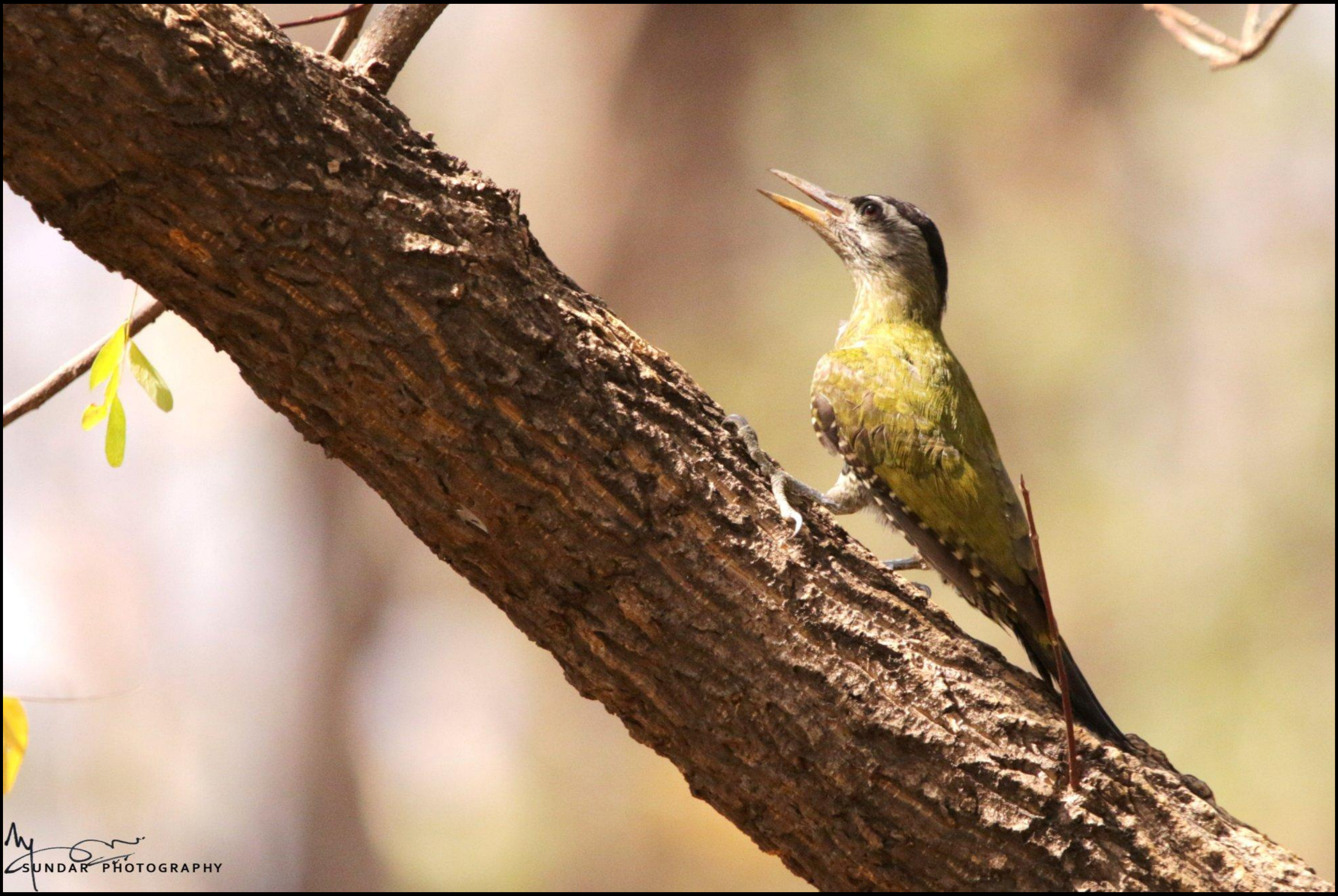

Naveen Sama Photography

Green-billed malkoha (*Phaenicophaeus tristis*)

© Naveen Sama **Gubbala Mangamma temple, Telangana**

A resident of Himalayas, Northeast and Eastern India

Notable Sightings



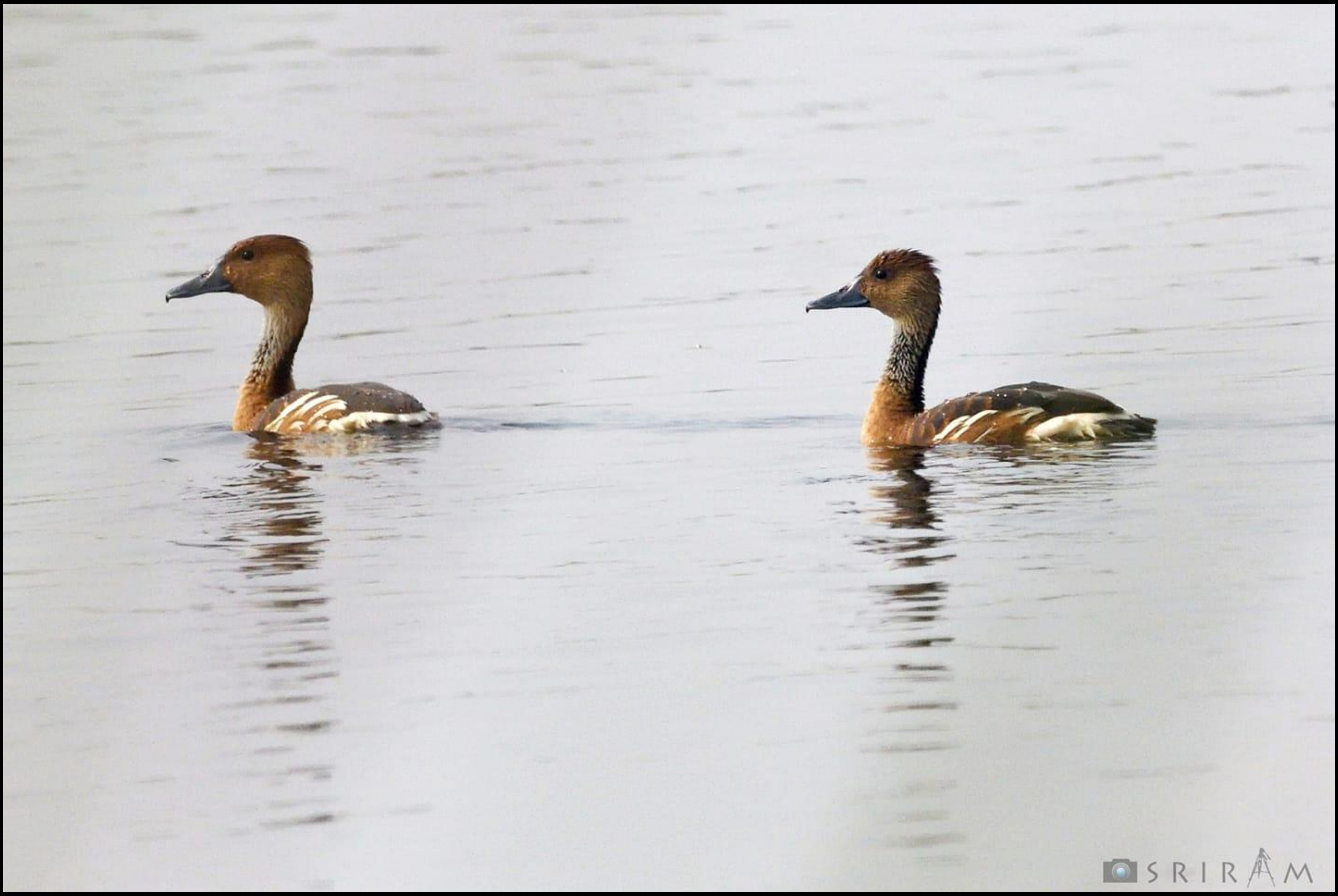
Streak-throated Woodpecker (*Picus xanthopygaeus*)

© Sundareswaran R Vetaikorumagan

Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary, Telangana

Widely distributed in Southern, Central and Northeast India. But rare for Telangana Region.

Notable Sightings



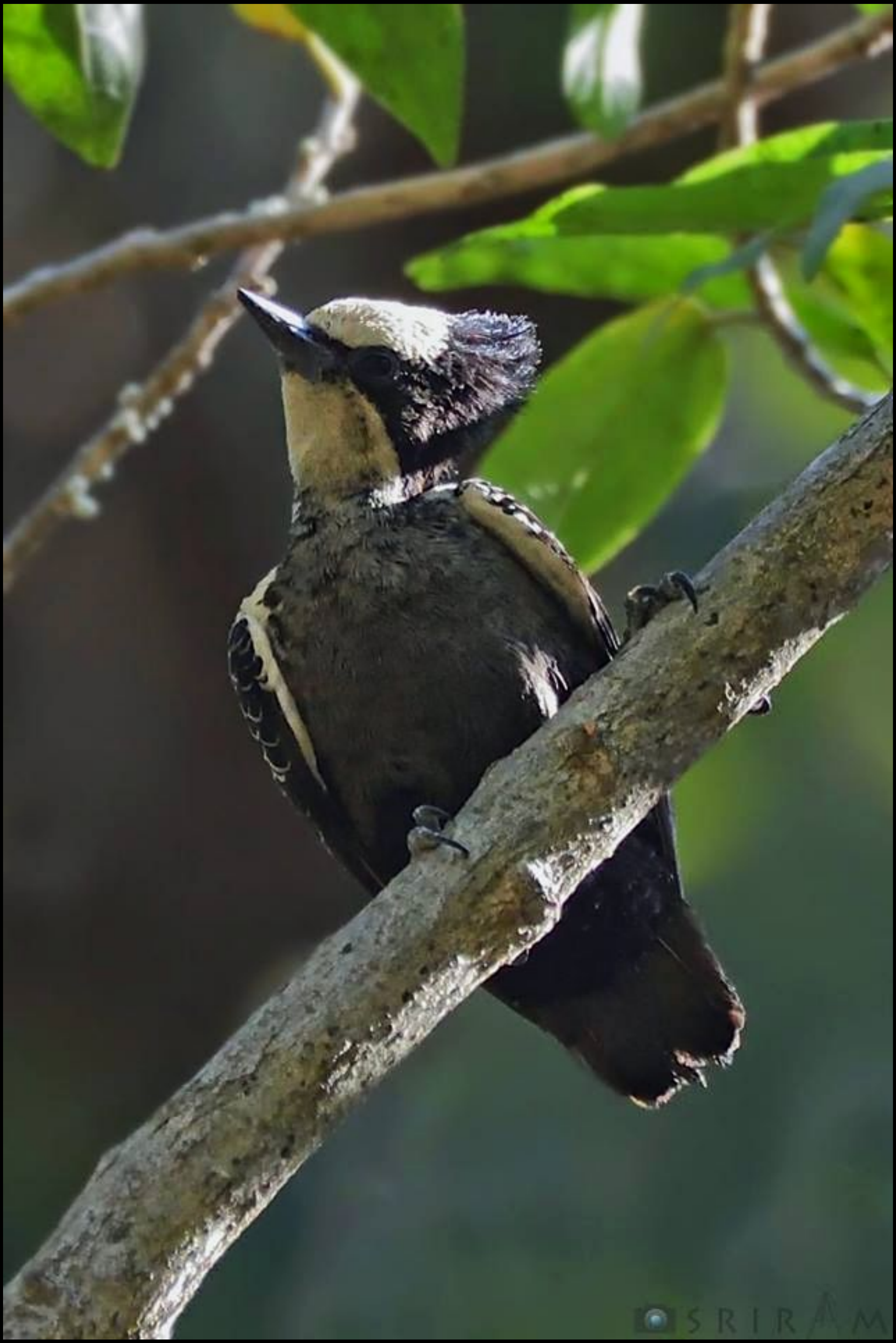
Fulvous Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

© Sriram Reddy

Manjeera Wildlife Sanctuary, Telangana

Resident bird of Northeast India. Rare for Telangana Region.

Notable Sightings

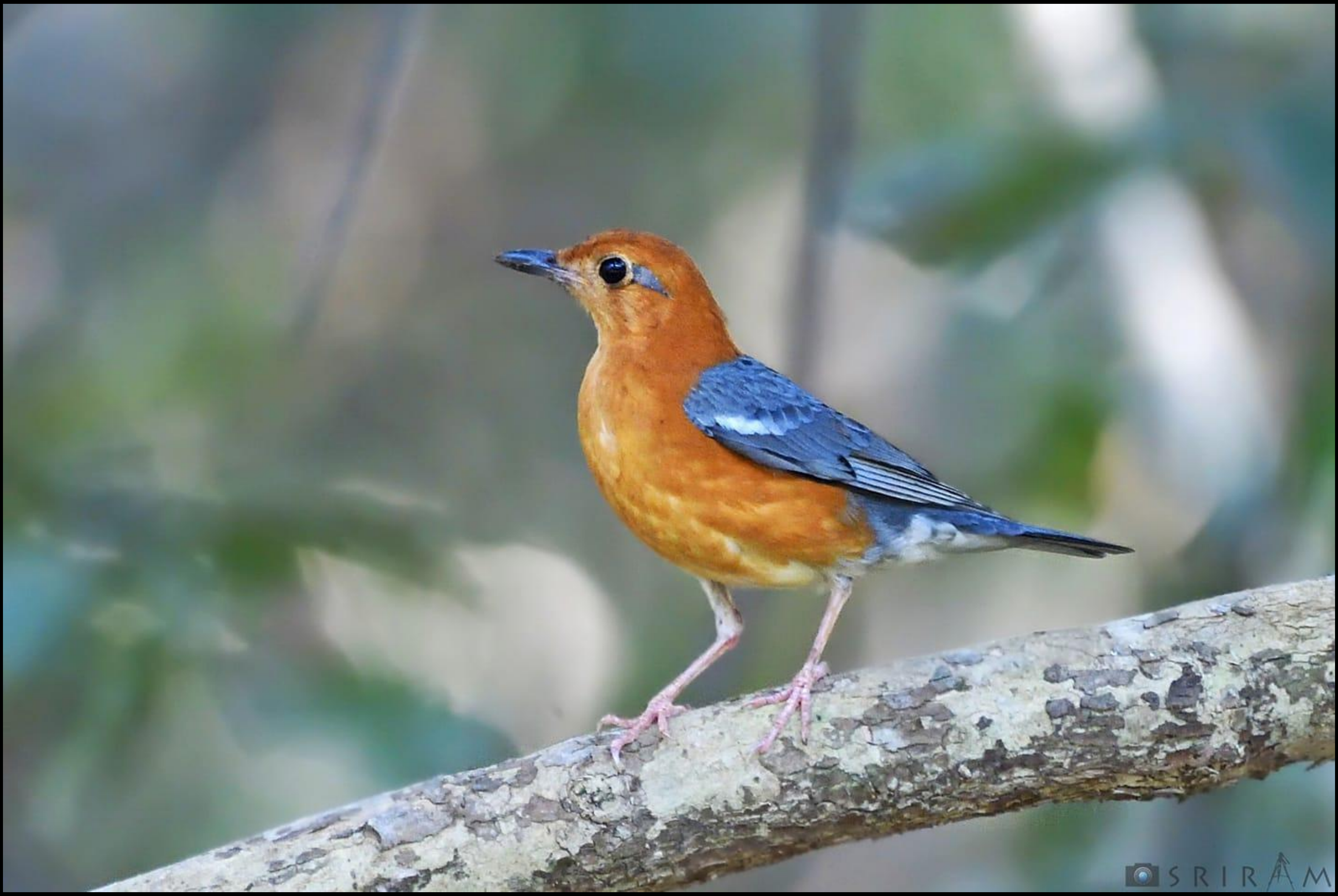


Heart-spotted Woodpecker (*Hemicircus canente*)

© Sriram Reddy **Gubbala Mangamma temple, Telangana**

Resident of West, East and Northeast India. Rare for Telangana Region.

Notable Sightings



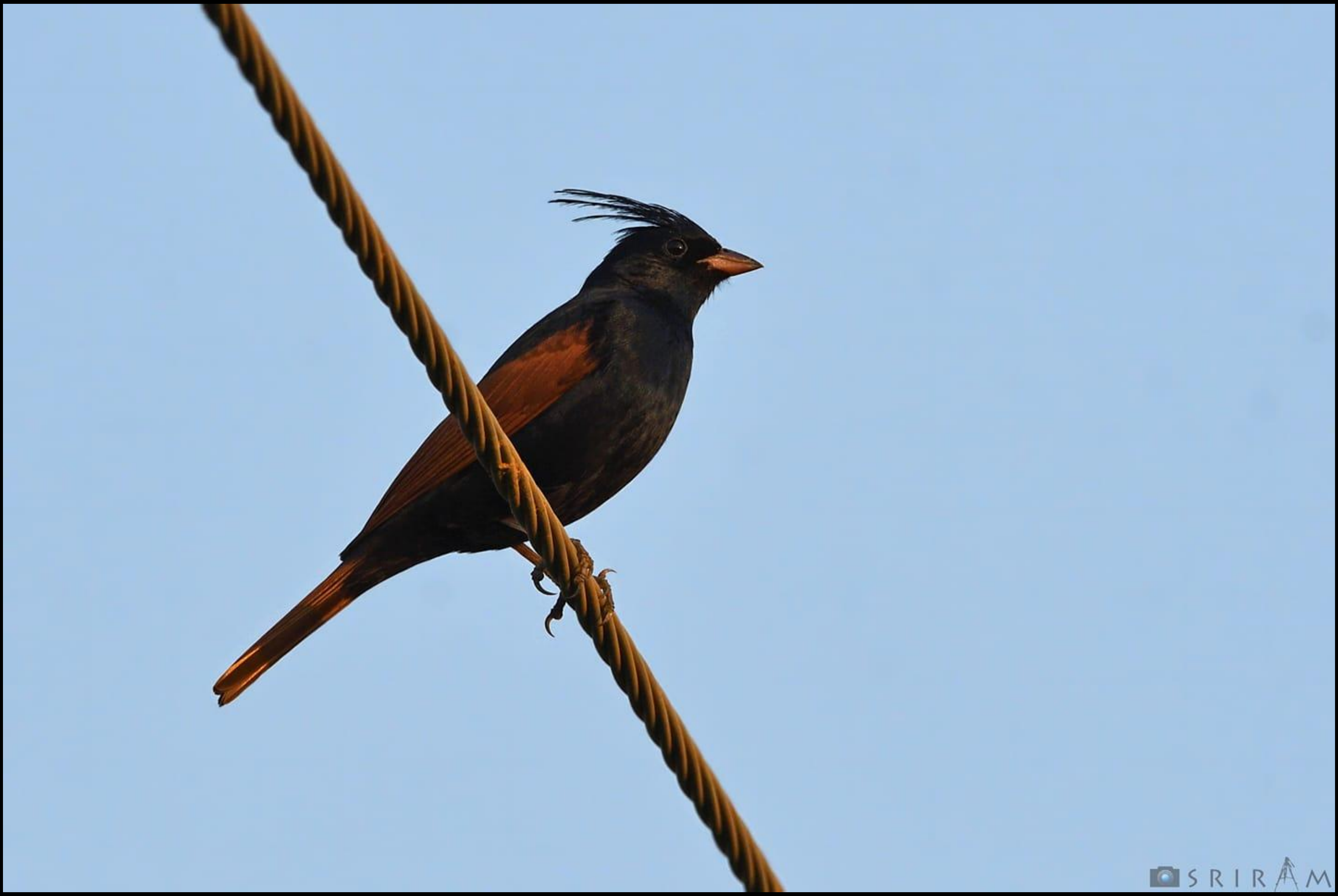
Orange-headed Thrush (*Geokichla citrina*)

© Sriram Reddy

Gubbala Mangamma temple, Telangana

Citrina subspecies breeds from northern India east along the Himalayas. It winters further south in India.

Notable Sightings



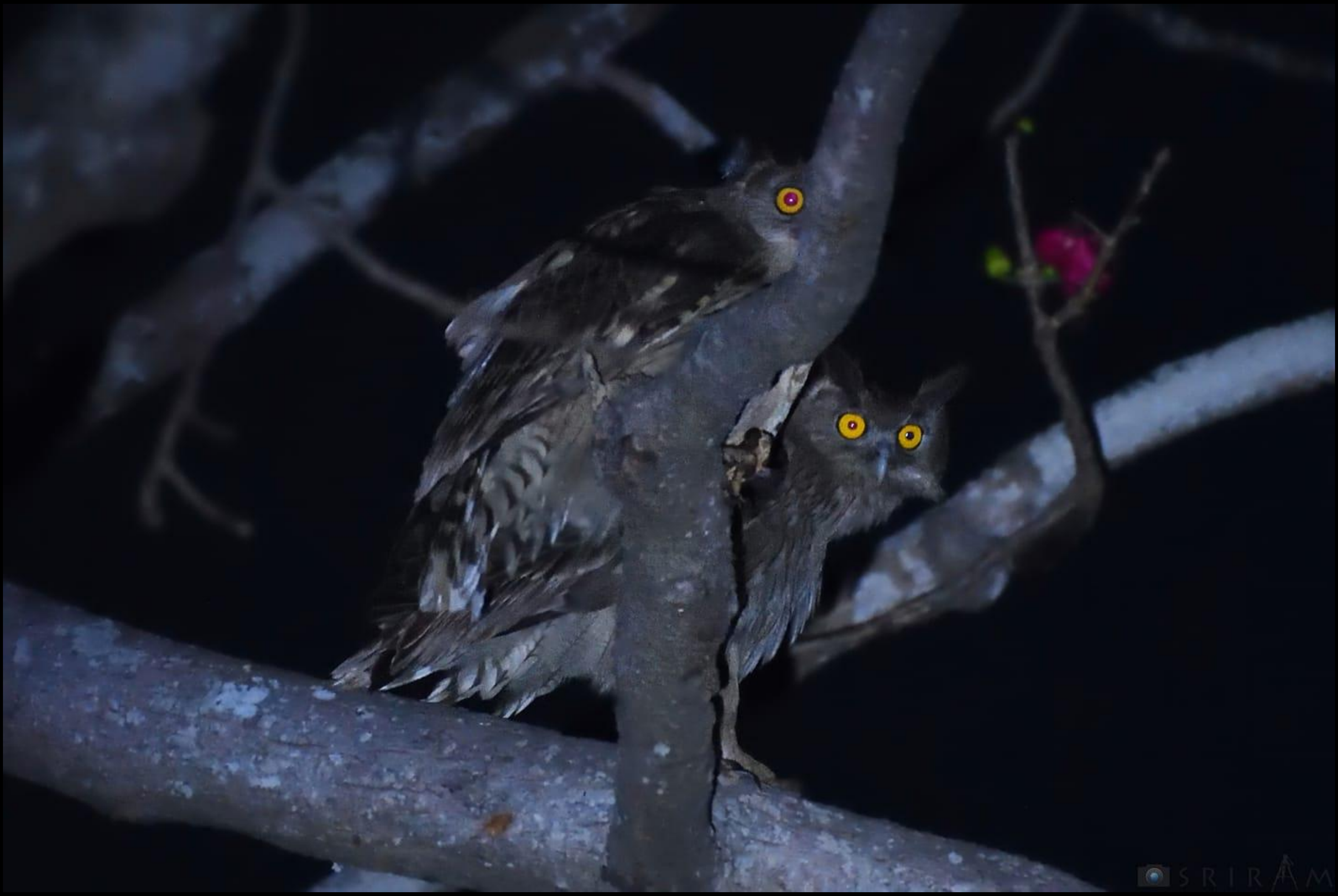
Crested Bunting(*Melophus lathami*)

© Sriram Reddy

Pakhal Lake, Telangana

Resident of Himalayan foothills and hills of Northeast and central India. A first record for Telangana as per e-bird.

Notable Sightings



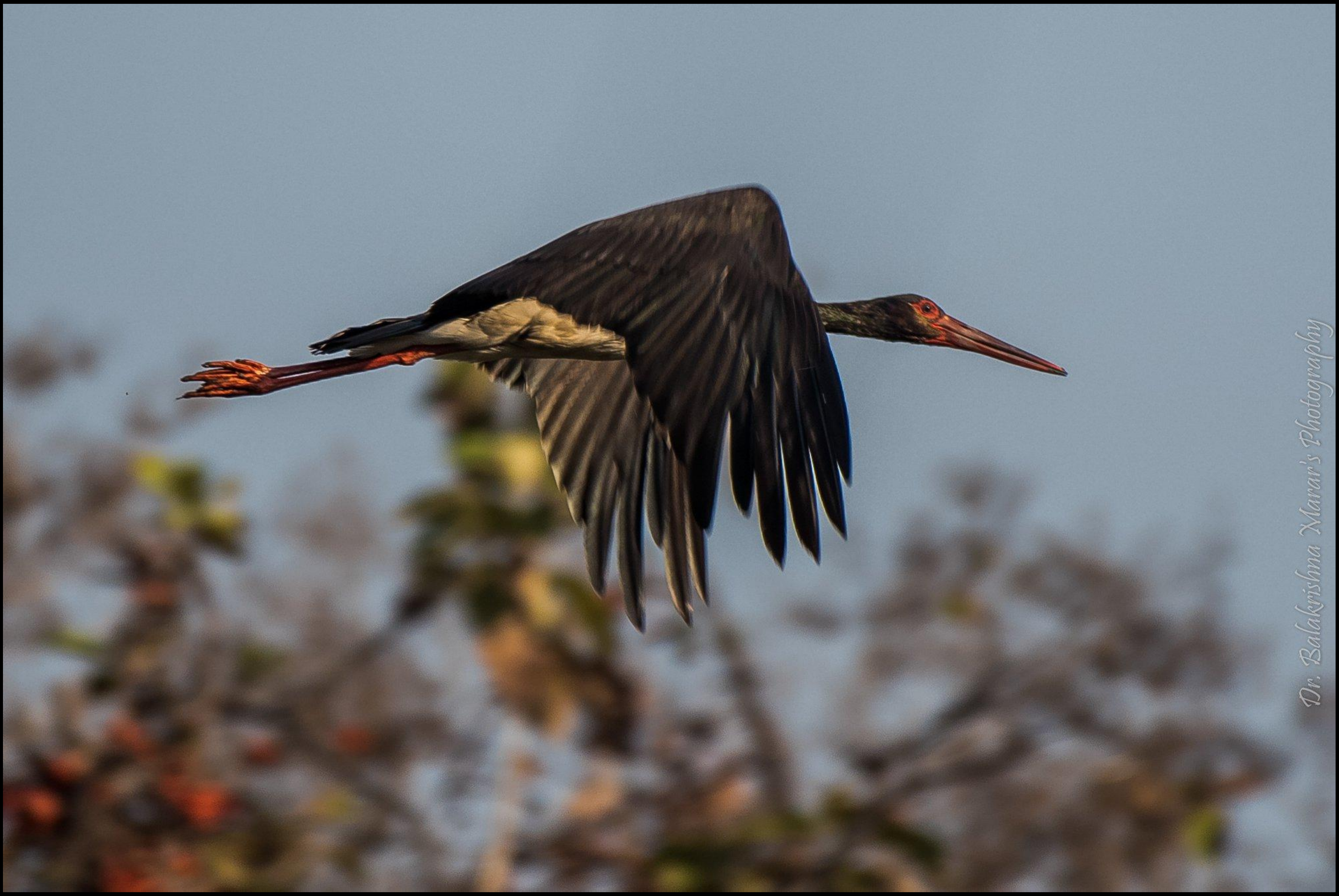
Dusky Eagle-owl (*Bubo coromandus*)

© Sriram Reddy

Warangal, Telangana

Widespread resident of central and north India. A first record for Telangana as per e-bird data.

Notable Sightings


Dr. Balakrishna Marar's Photography

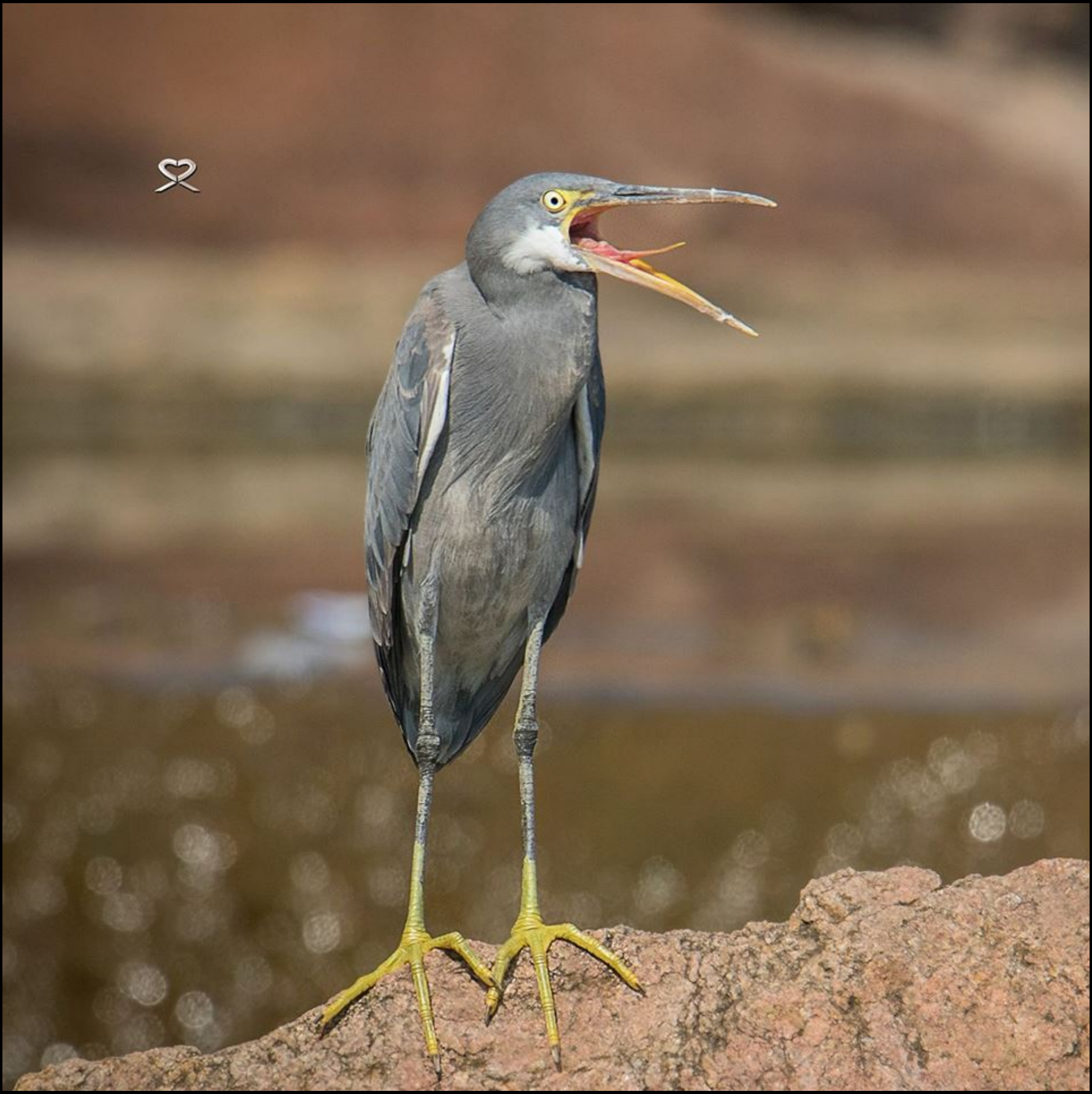
Black stork (*Ciconia nigra)*

© Balakrishna Marar

Kawal Tiger Reserve, Telangana

Winter visitor and passage migrant to mainly north and western India.

Notable Sightings



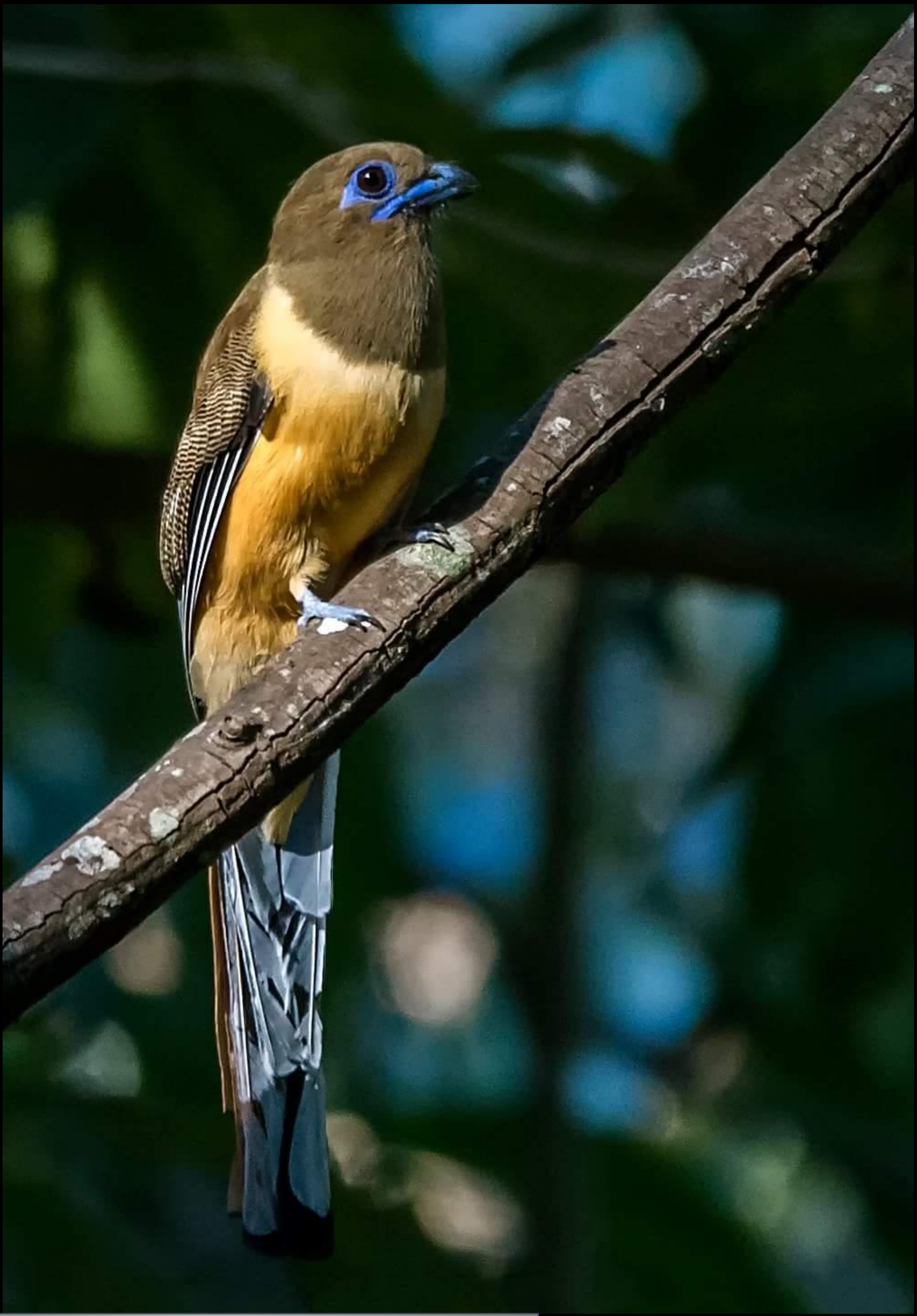
Western reef heron (*Egretta gularis)*

© Rakesh Reddy Ponnala

Manjeera, Telangana

A resident. Mainly for west and southeast coast of India.

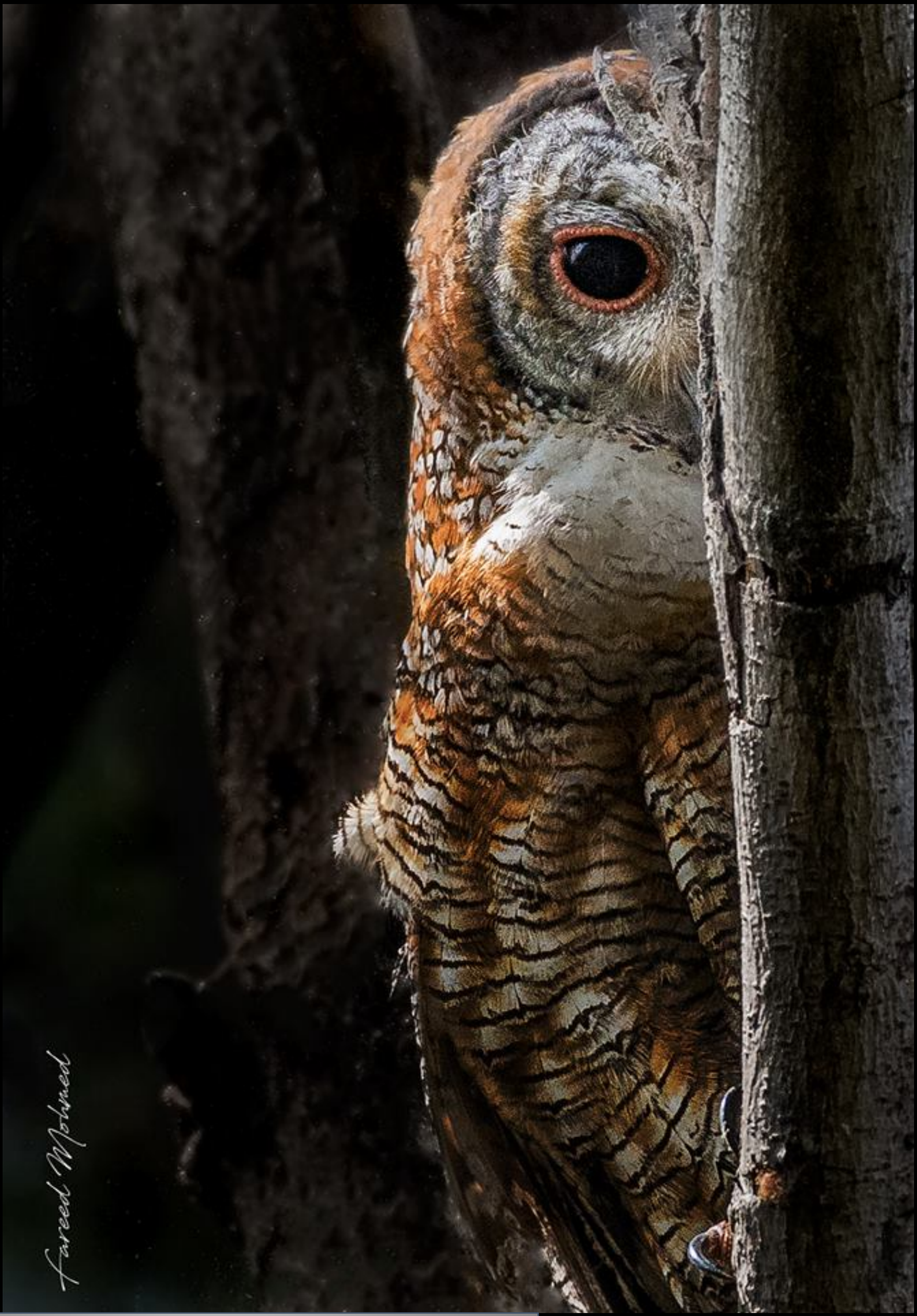
Photographer's Corner



Malabar trogon *(Harpactes fasciatus)*
Gubbala Mangamma Temple, Telangana

© Naresh Vadrevu

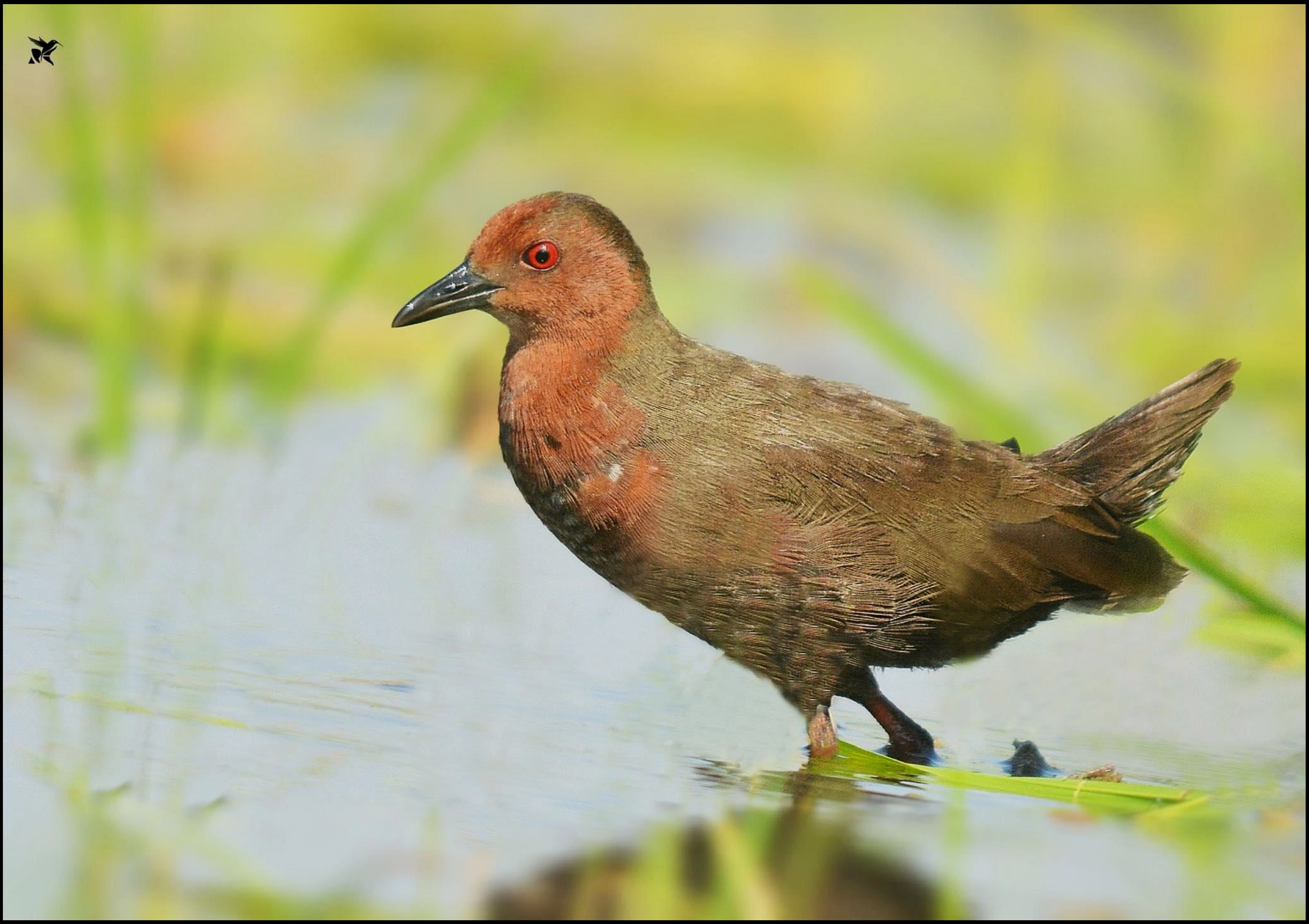
Photographer’s Corner



Mottled wood owl *(Strix ocellata)*
Telangana

© Fareed Mohmed

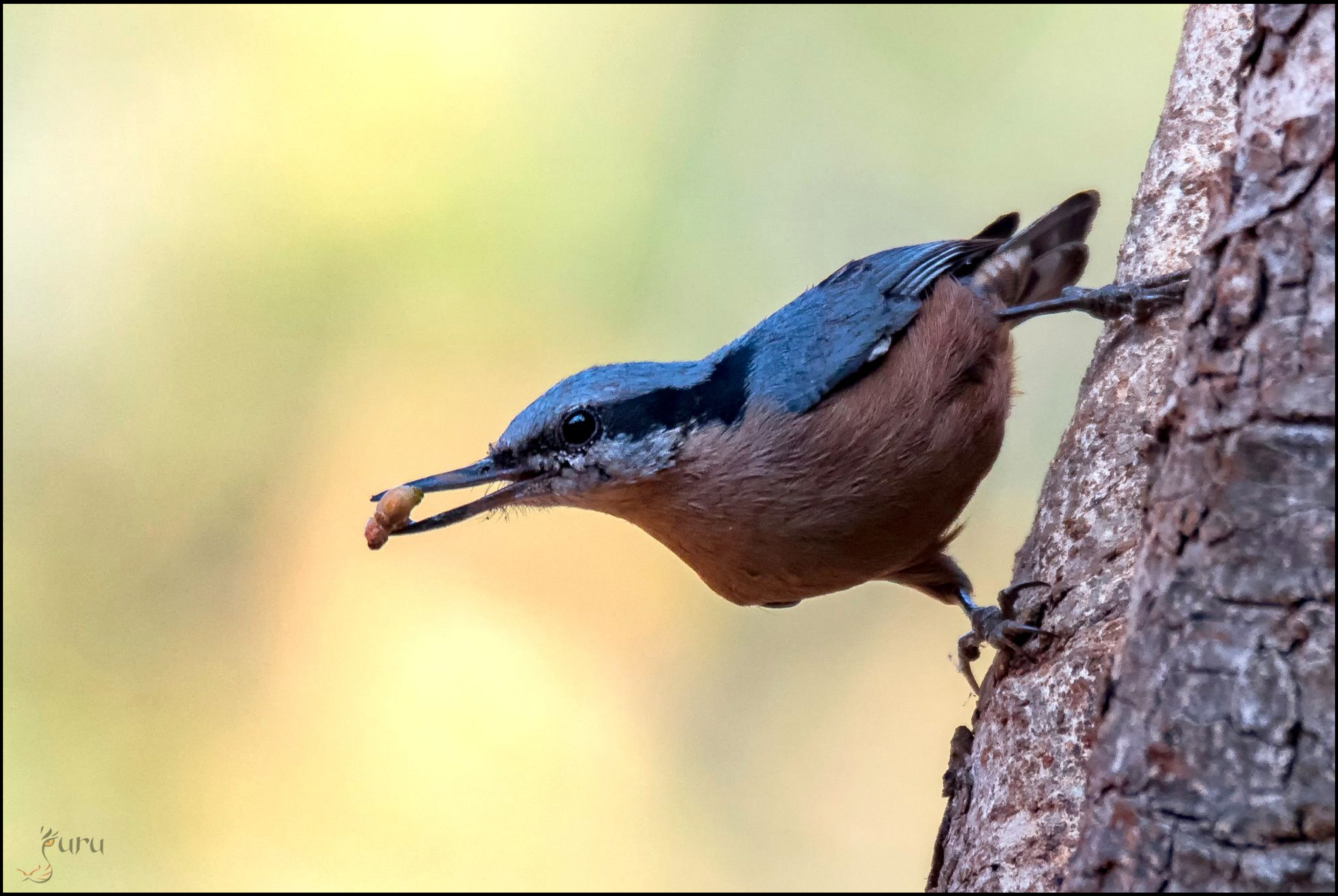
Photographer's Corner



Ruddy-breasted crake *(Porzana fusca)*
Manjeera, Telangana

© RK ßálájí

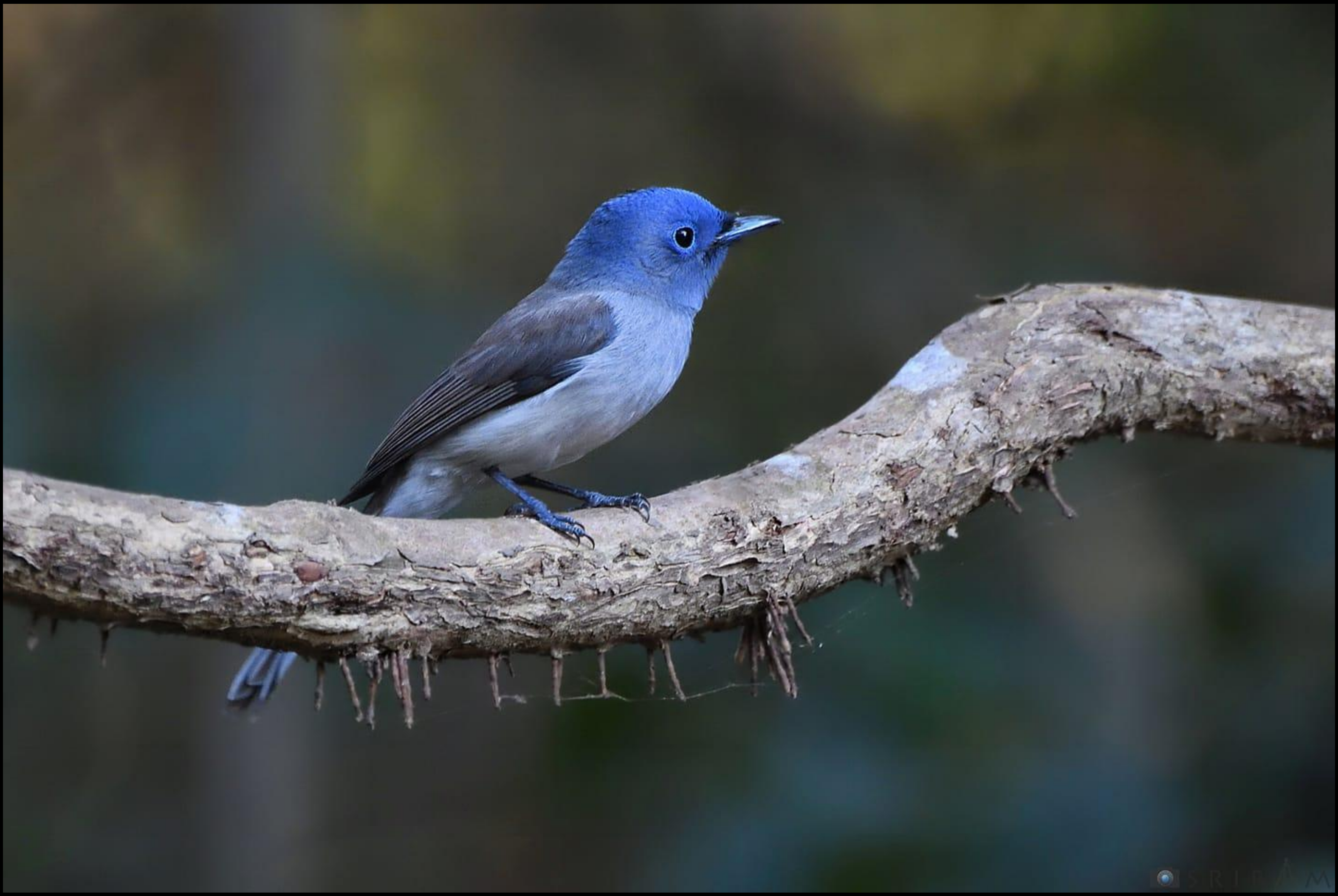
Photographer's Corner



Indian nuthatch (*Sitta castanea*)
Gubbala Mangamma Temple, Telangana

© Guru Raju

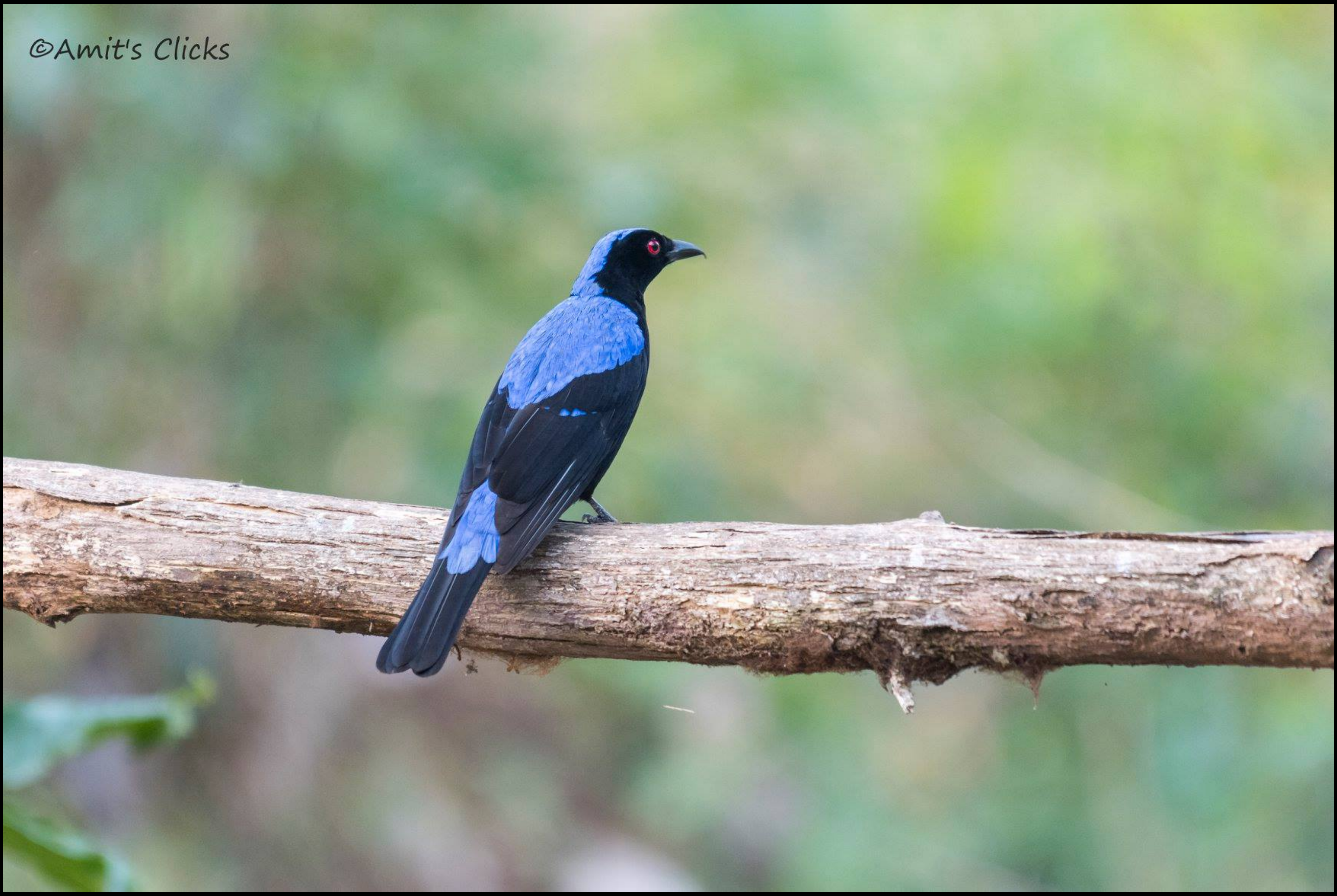
Photographer's Corner



Black-naped monarch (*Hypothymis azurea*)
Gubbala Mangamma Temple, Telangana

© *Sriram Reddy*

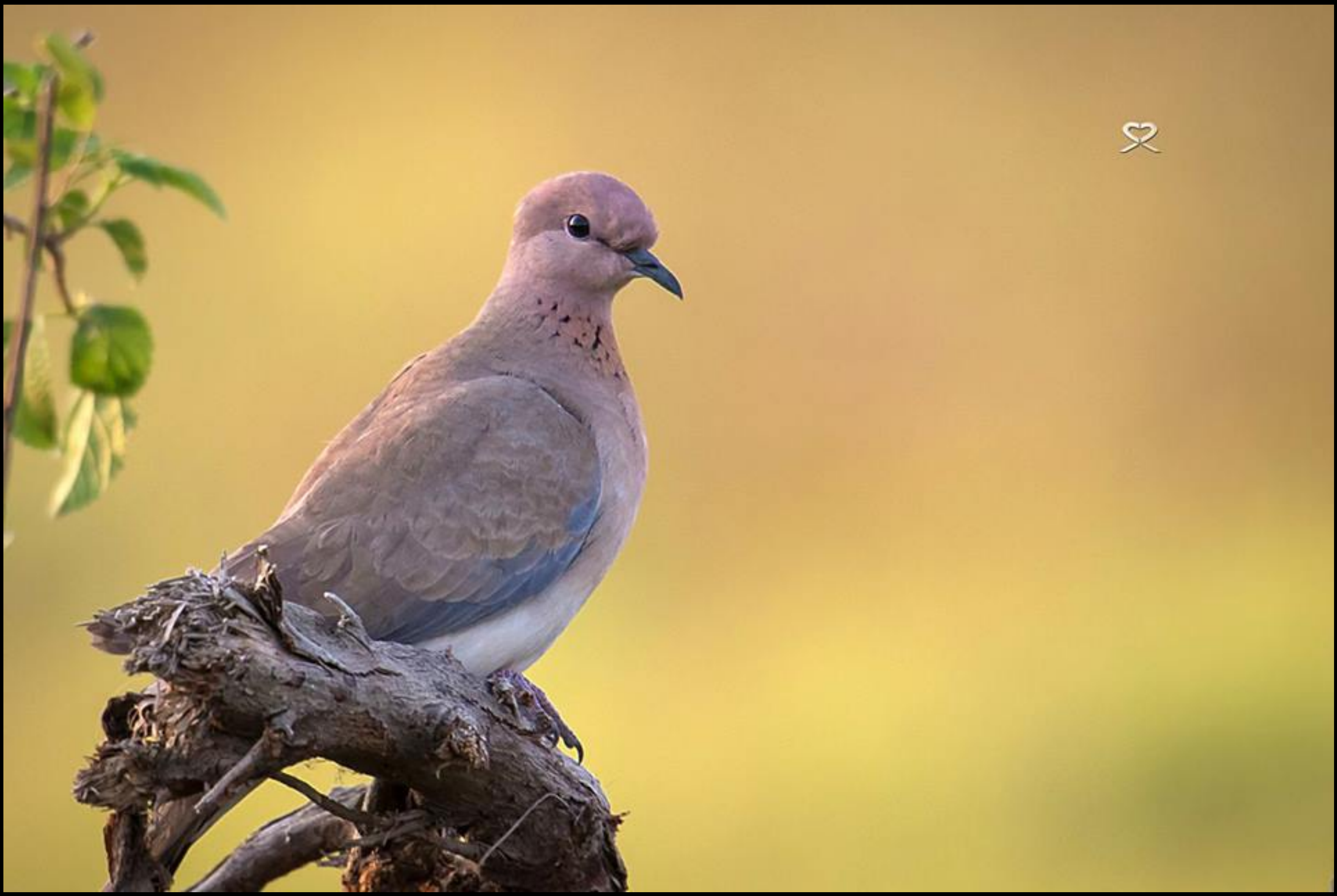
Photographer’s Corner


©Amit's Clicks

Asian fairy-bluebird (*Irena puella*)
Thattekad, Kerala

© Amit Kumar

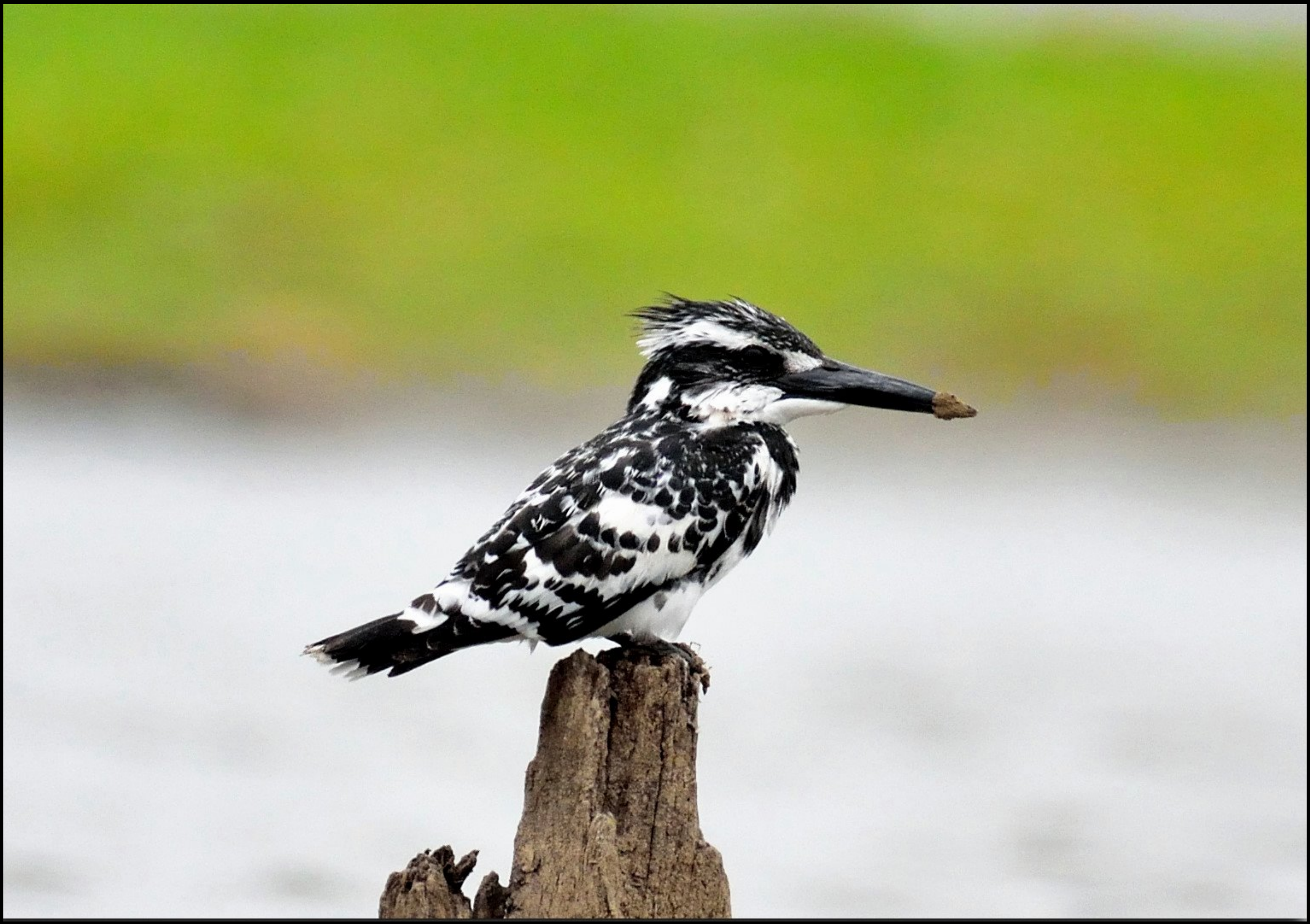
Photographer's Corner



Laughing dove (*Spilopelia senegalensis*)
Manjeera, Telangana

© Rakesh Reddy Ponnala

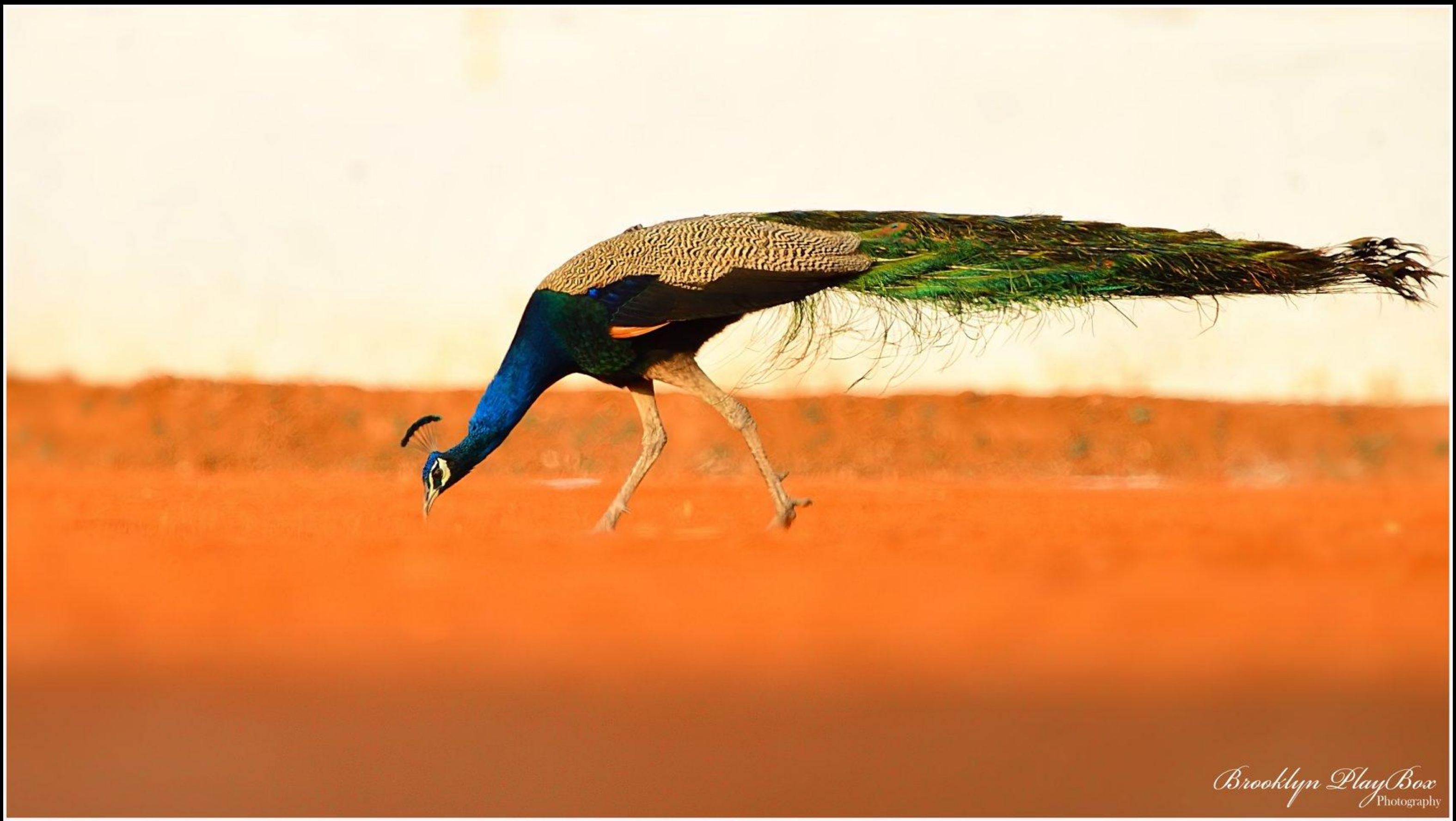
Photographer's Corner



Pied Kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*)
Borgaon Dam, Maharashtra

© Mangesh Singh Thakur

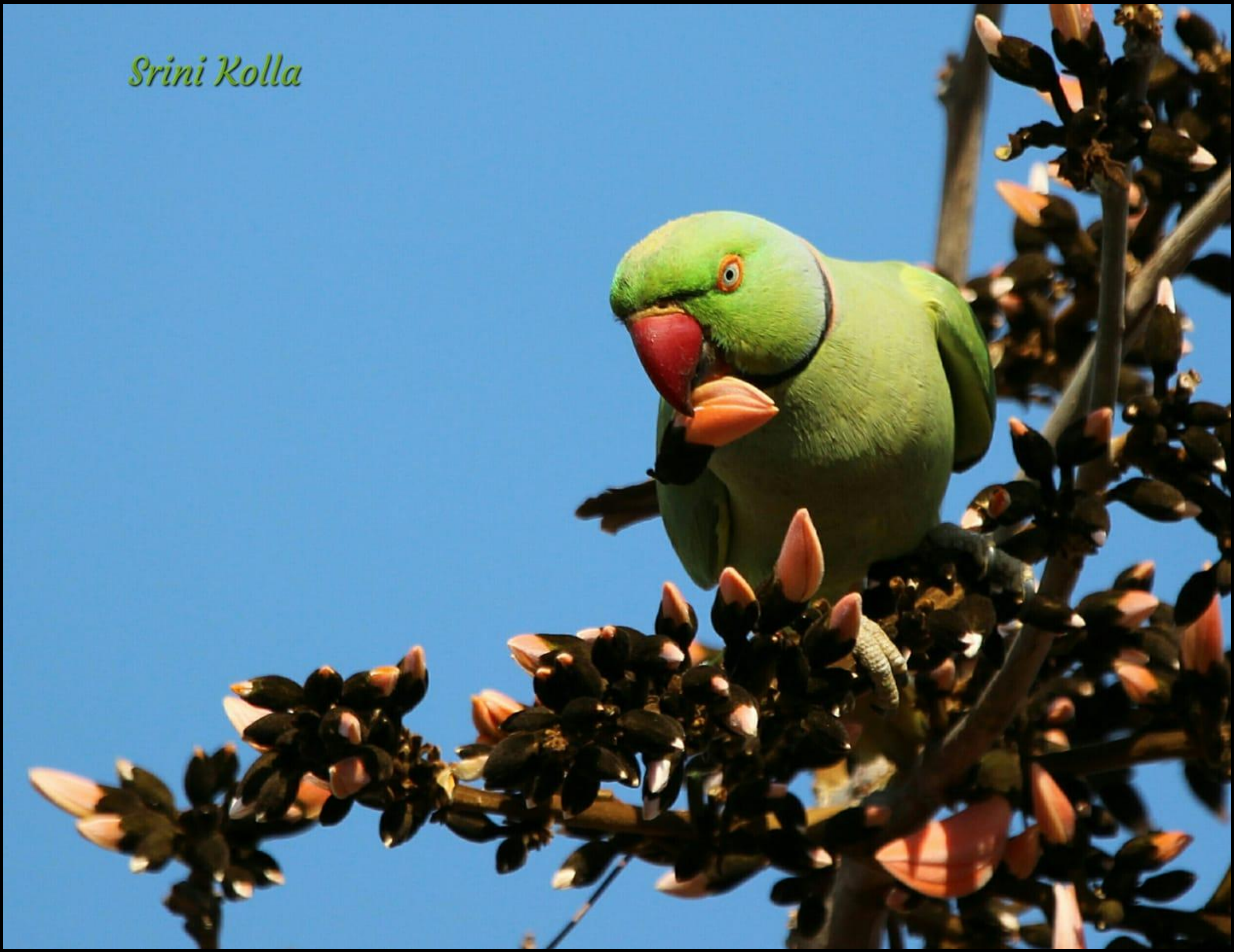
Photographer's Corner


Brooklyn PlayBox
Photography

Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)
SVP National Police Academy, Telangana

© Suman Bhattacharjee

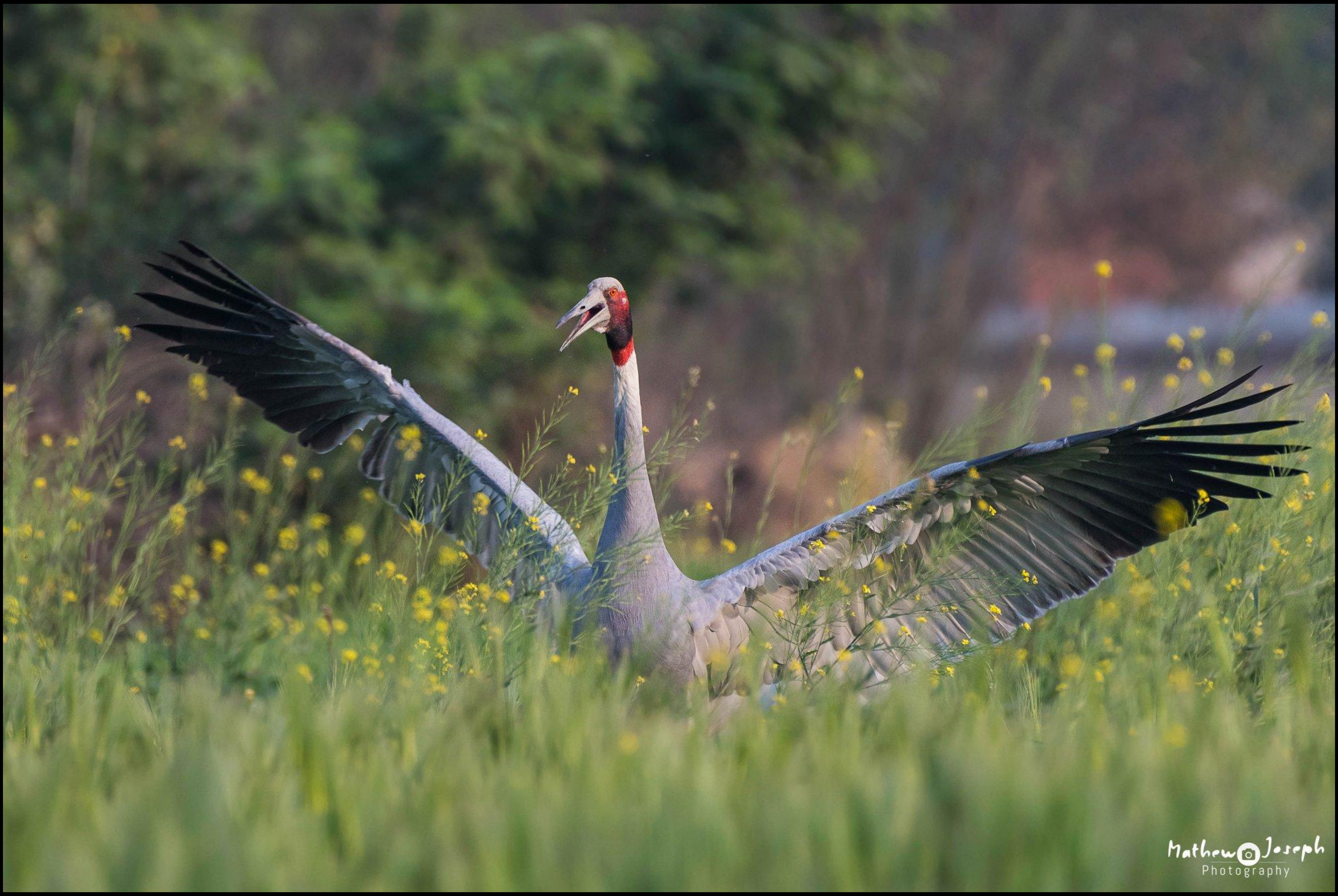
Photographer's Corner



Rose-ringed parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)
Narsapur Forest, Telangana

© Srinivas Kolla

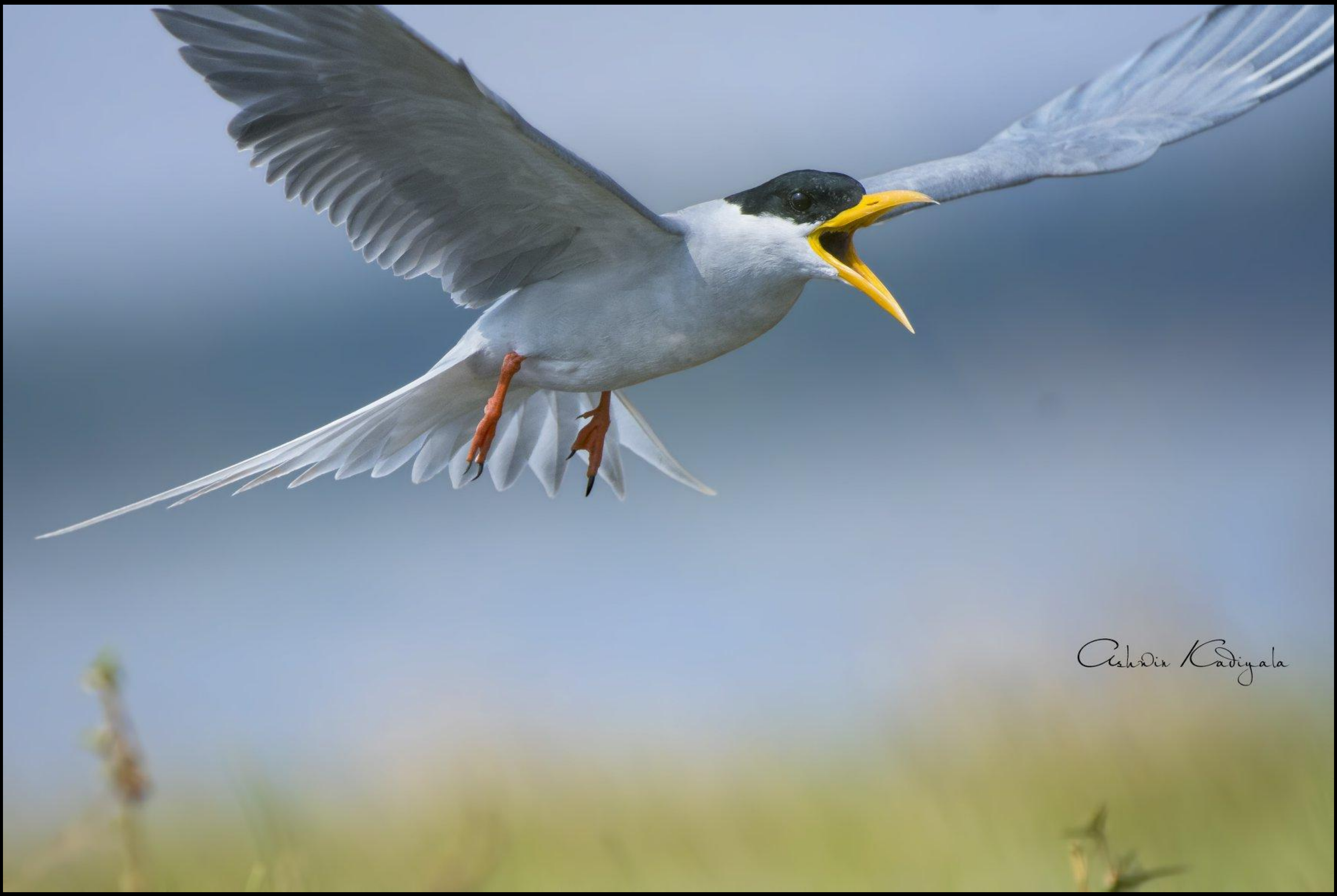
Photographer’s Corner


Mathew Joseph
Photography

Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*)
Dhanauri wetlands, Greater Noida, Delhi

© Mathew Joseph

Photographer's Corner



River Tern (*Sterna aurantia*)
Manjeera, Telangana

© Ashwin Kadiyala

ARANYA

Black-winged stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
By RK ßálájí

Hyderabad Birding Pals